









## Greener pastures

Paul Weindling

KENNETH R. MANNING  
Black Apollo of Science: The life of Ernest  
Everett Just.  
397pp. Oxford University Press. £27.  
0195032993

The first major triumph by the United States over Germany during the twentieth century was not military, diplomatic or economic but in the realm of science. American supremacy in biology became rapidly evident after 1900, when German scientists sensed that they had lost their prestigious lead in cell biology, embryology, genetics and biochemistry. Carnegie and then Rockefeller pumped unparalleled resources into education and research. Alarmed at the take-off in US research, Krupp and other industrial magnates financed pure research in the new Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes on the eve of war. But in seizing the lead in genetics and embryology, it can be argued that science in the United States became isolationist, narrow and rigid. Moreover, the scientific eclipse of Germany was not total, as the Weimar Republic, despite military and economic collapse, sustained significant theoretical debates and fundamental research.

Ernest Everett Just, a black American, was an exceptional biologist, whose career began in 1907 and illustrates the rising distinction and intolerance of science in the United States. In 1930 he transferred his allegiances to German science, posing interesting questions as to what there was to admire in German biology during the transition to fascism. Segregated American universities, anti-theoretical research trends, and prejudiced collusion between colleagues and funding agencies drove Just to idealize European virtues. Europeans found him cultured, an accomplished researcher and an exotic personality. German and Italian acclaim inspired his major theoretical work in the 1930s.

Just hoped that intellectual prowess would dispel the myth of "negro" inferiority. He sought distinction not as a "negro scientist", but as America's leading biologist. He calculated that the cold-blooded objectivity of science would mean that a PhD and research papers would result in professional respect and a job commensurate with his abilities. It was a delusion: no white university ever employed Just.

## The carnivorous kind

Hans Kruuk

DAVID MACDONALD (Editor)  
The Encyclopedia of Mammals: 1  
445pp. Allen and Unwin. £25.  
004500026X

The *Encyclopedia of Mammals* is an attempt to circumvent the difficulty of summarizing the work of many scientists by letting two hundred odd of them speak for themselves, under close direction, each in a limited format, with ample facilities of illustration, their individual contributions being interspersed with editorial overviews. It is a great success.

Strictly speaking the title of the book is a misnomer. The knowledge imparted is not encyclopedic, nor is it presented in any alphabetic or taxonomic order. Instead, the editor has arranged the first of two volumes to start with the carnivores, which are his own special interest; the volume further contains sections on primates, and on whales and other sea mammals. The second volume, announced for October of this year, will contain the herbivores, insectivores, bats and marsupials.

Whether one is a scientist or not, the first striking aspect of this large-format book is pictures, many of which are stunning. They take up about half of the available space, often portraying events and behaviour patterns rather than being mere portraits. Mostly they are colour photographs, such as an unforgettable picture of a herd of seals covering an Antarctic beach with a killer whale cruising a few metres away, a lioness attacking a herd of zebra, a lemur displaying its tail, a polar bear at bay.

He was forced to serve his "race" by teaching low-level courses at Howard, a black university in Washington DC. Tolerance and equal opportunity were fictions at a time when many American biologists were racist in both their personal prejudices and eugenic research.

The only sanctuary allowed to Just was to spend summers from 1909 to 1929 at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory. Despite its reputation for conviviality, Just was never accepted into this biological Mecca as an equal. Initially, he had to do menial tasks, and later he was preyed on by less competent colleagues and students, as his technical virtuosity made him a sort of superior scientific slave. The Director, Frank Lillie, was encouraging and protective, but convinced of Just's subordinate career prospects. White scientists, whether WASPish and conservative like Lillie, or Jewish, materialist and radical like Jacques Loeb, did damage to Just in reports to powerful foundation men like Abraham Flexner. The intrinsic merits of Just's research on fertilization counted for little.

In 1930 Just escaped by embarking on a long-dreamed-of journey to Europe. The hallowed Stazione Zoologica in Naples, a sadly run-down German outpost, and the Berlin Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Biologie were scenes for revitalizing experiences. Just mortified American researchers with his verdict that one year in Europe was worth ten at Woods Hole. He dined with Margret Boveri, the daughter of an eminent biologist and later to be a successful writer, and fell in love with a philosophy student, Hedwig Schmetzler, who assisted with his major work, *The Biology of the Cell Surface*. His marriage had been ruined by absences at Woods Hole, and by the strains of teaching at Howard. He attempted to give his life a new unity, and he vainly looked for funding to stay in Europe.

Just was inspired by Europe's vanished imperial splendour, as he courted dignitaries like the theologian, Adolf von Harnack, and the German Crown Prince. He felt relieved of daily pressures of segregation in hotels and restaurants, although he overlooked more subtle forms of prejudice, for example in Harnack's offer of hospitality which was designed to stop his affair with Boveri. Just was unaware that his attractions were enhanced in Berlin's atmosphere of decadence and political tension.

whales in a huge Antarctic landscape. Necessarily, some photographs are less impressive; some are of animals which I suspect of being stuffed (wild cat); or trapped (badger); but overall they are an excellent collection. The many paintings and drawings match surprisingly well with the photographs, showing species differences, important behaviour patterns or the functioning of the mammalian body.

The text is somewhat unexpected. There are "boxes" with facts on each species: distribution, size, coat-colour, food, breeding data, longevity. Perhaps these are the least satisfactory parts; the descriptions of coat colours are often unnecessary with such good illustrations, and data on breeding and feeding, which would have been very useful in a book like this, are given for some species but not for others, even when they are available and the species has been well studied. The meat of the work is in the main text, in which research zoologists write on their own particular interests. There are differences in quality between the contributions, and differences in emphasis; some of the contributors are interested mostly in social behaviour, some in feeding ecology, some in relations with man, conservation, or in taxonomy. At times this makes it impossible to compare species: for instance communication and social behaviour may be described in accurate detail for hyenas, but little is said about these aspects of the life of bears. The primate contributions focus on social organization and behaviour, those on whales emphasize ecology, migrations, exploitation by man, as well as grouping.

To indicate the scope of this work it is sufficient to look at a fairly random selection of headings: there are sections on kin selection in

Why Just became enraptured with German biology is an intriguing question, but one not explored in *Black Apollo of Science*. The biology during the 1920s and 1930s. Under embryology in the United States, which was restricted to the laboratory tracing of lineages and to a rigidly mechanistic analysis. German embryologists sought to integrate explanations of many processes in development. Hans Spemann was renowned for his holistic approaches to experimentation, as reflected in his discoveries of lens induction and of "the organizer", as well as for his vitalist and Lamarckian sympathies. Just's research on the relations between the cell and organism was non-reductionist. He favourably trusted Kropotkin's theories of cooperation with Darwinian selection. He attacked Morgan's genetics, while advocating cytoplasmic inheritance and environmental effects as heredity.

In March 1939 Just finally recognized the barbarity of Nazi Germany. He remained at the French marine biological station at Roscoff until 1940, immersed in a statesman-like attitude on unsolved problems in biology. Only after arrest did he return to the United States. Hedwig, who was pregnant, in 1941 he died. He was embittered, but also fulfilled in his intellectual and spiritual quest.

Kenneth R. Manning's biography is meticulously and sensitively researched, and makes gripping reading. He breaks down the association of an open American biological community by pointing to intellectual, political and racial divides. Once definitive, positive eulogies of embryology there, exemplified by the essays of the scientist-historian, J. Oppenheimer, now look like exculpatory excuses. No longer can fairy tales be told of American researchers took up the mechanistic German research of his, but and Weismann, while rejecting other "spurious" tendencies, and so laid the foundations of twentieth-century life sciences. Just's research raises the question of how successful embryology and genetics in the United States have been in solving fundamental problems in developmental biology. Although Just was published more than a fragment of his synthesis of biology, anthropology and ethics it is to Manning's credit that his biography provides just such a synthesis.

a lion pride; on fox classification; on the lack to-front social system of wild dogs; the evolution of a "fox on stilts"; conservation of polar bears; why male wensels are bigger than females; the mystery of mass stranding of whales; the feeding habits of "rough" (whales); eskimo hunting of the bowhead whale; the culling of seal cuts in Canada. The large part of the book that deals with primary answers such questions as "what does a wren gobble mean?"; it deals with gang warfare amongst chimpanzees; with cooperation between different species of monkey; with the male-dominated society of baboons; with the fanatical, exploration and play. There is an exhilarating two-page description of the call and songs of one of the gibbons, and a section on howling by moonlight.

Almost unavoidably in such a volume where authors had to confine themselves, and contributions are merely initiated, one finds the presentation of unsubstantiated, though interesting, speculations as facts. There are, for instance, bland statements such as that "the social system of male territoriality in itself restricts the density of cheetahs"; to my knowledge there are no data, anywhere, to support this, and in fact it seems a rather unlikely situation in view of what we know about other animals. Similarly, the firm statement that "walrus distribute their impact on the food supply and minimize potential conflict between adult and adolescent males in the breeding season" (by seasonal separation of the sexes) is in fact a rather wild guess.

But these are no more than minor blemishes. The publishers claim that the book is "a delight to the eye and a stimulus to the mind", and they

## Surrender to the secret Female tide

Lorna Sage

JOYCE CAROL OATES  
Mysteries of Winterthurn  
482pp. Cape. £9.95.  
0224021974

For all our talk about the pleasure of the text, we still rather recoil from the messy, habit-forming real thing. Occasionally a novel that is clear about its low connections (with thrills, greed, strangeness) slips past the nervous inner censor. Eco's *The Name of the Rose* is the most shameless recent example. Is it because he's a semiotician that we feel somehow safe? Perhaps. Though the fact that Joyce Carol Oates teaches literature at Princeton doesn't seem to do her a great deal of good, in this country at least. She brings out the residual puritan in a great many reviewers, especially in her latest mode of lavish nineteenth-century pastiche. All too much, they cry, wanting to get it over with in the cause of mental hygiene: parody-Gothic, point taken, but why go through the motions? As if the motions weren't the point. But then, the brothel-scenes in everybody's fantasies are done in Victorian décor. The scene of the crime in *Mysteries of Winterthurn* is very close to home.

Ms Oates's hero Xavier Kilgarvan is a gentleman detective in the great tradition: a scientific connoisseur of clues, the first man to persuade an American court to convict on a fingerprint, a master of disguise. He is (we're told) as famous as the fictional Mr Holmes, and almost as immortal.

By the time of our present narrative, Xavier Kilgarvan had been struck on the head from behind so often, no one has offered a very convincing estimate. Upon one singularly disagreeable occasion, he was trussed up in a tarpaulin, and thrown into the freezing East River; upon another, he was bound with yards of wire, and left in a baker's oven. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, he was near-devoured by a three-hundred-pound sow; in a luxurious resort in

Barbados, he was nearly pecked to death by an African parrot, of the giant species. These, however, says our *blatant* narrator, are the cases the whole world knows about. We're offered more sophisticated fare, the unsolved and hitherto unwritten mysteries of the great man's career – all, oddly enough, occurring in his birth-place, Winterthurn. Out in the wide world, from his Manhattan office, Xavier pursues "the facts" with success; but in this sleepy provincial backwater his detective methods seem to recoil, most unfairly, upon himself.

His first schoolboy investigations in his own large family set the anomalous pattern. It all starts with a conventional, if nasty, locked-room mystery at his wealthy uncle's house: a baby found dead and mutilated, its mother – a dim, visiting relation – speechless and mad with fear next to the tiny corpse. The police hypothesize monster rats, and also destroy a toothless pet dog to be on the safe side, but Xavier perseveres, and is drawn into a labyrinth of conjecture about the spinster mistress of the house, his cousin Georgina, poetess and eccentric. Her staccato, secretive verses, her intense love for her cruel father, hint horribly at a whole brood of dead babies, a vampiric family of vengeful and hungry ghosts. . . .

Xavier, who'd hoped literally-mindedly to discover traces of an intruder, some concealed stairway, finds himself contemplating an obscene haunting, a gap in the logical fabric, a fissure in reality. Each time he examines the fatal room, his gaze returns to its most showy and obvious feature – a *troupe l'oeil* mural portraying "The Virgin in the Rose Bower". In its flaking paint and tricky technique he glimpses his own dilemma, mirrored. The glowing cherubs surrounding the Virgin Mother seem to defy their two dimensions, and to take on a spurious, threatening life in his adolescent imagination. Is he making what he sees? It must be so, for the alternative (that the familiar world contains duplicitous and hateful depths of evil) is too horrible to contemplate.

to good use when one of the principals commits suicide by throwing himself down the stairwell of his modern block of flats. This is definitely the best *Treasure* for a long time: good plot, bright dialogue, sharp characters, all against a convincingly detailed financial and advertising background.

MANUEL YAZQUEZ MONTALBAN  
Murder in the Central Committee  
203pp. Pluto Press. £7.95.  
086107710

The lights fuse during a meeting of the Central Committee of the Spanish Communist Party. When they go on again, Fernando Garrido, the general secretary, is dead. Which member of the Committee has solved a factional quarrel with a knife? The party hires Pepe Carvalho, detective, gourmet and cook, to find out. Carvalho, a kind of mobile Catalan Nero Wolfe, is an inspired creation, and Montalban's narration is fast, witty and funny. But both plot and detection are rudimentary; and the ideological in-fighting which replaces them, though treated semi-parodically, is in the end interesting only to connoisseurs of Spanish left-wing factionalism. Carvalho is, however, too good a discovery to lose, and one hopes that the other three books in which he appears will also be translated in due course.

ERIC WRIGHT  
Smoke Detector  
186pp. Collins. £6.95.  
0002314150

Inspector Charlie Salter of the Toronto police, hero of Eric Wright's excellent first novel, *The Night the Gods Spilled*, is back with a case of arson and murder which seems to get more complicated the more it is investigated. But Salter gets it right in the end, at the same time solving the problem of his teenage son, putting his relationship with his wife on a new footing, and mending the screen door in the bedroom. A solid, satisfying piece of work, full of real people in a real city, and with a good surprise ending too.

## Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

M.R.D. MEEK  
The Sitting Ducks  
198pp. Collins. £6.95.  
0002317400

A series of deaths in a small Cornish town puts the suicide rate way above the national average. Lennox Kemp, newly taken on by a firm of solicitors after leaving a detective agency, smells a rat and delves into local family history for an explanation. The provincial setting is well done, and there are some interesting and unusual characters, ranging from a hippie guru to a patriarch farmer. The plot, however, is not altogether convincing and the ending disappoints.

GILLIAN LINSKOTT  
A Healthy Body  
190pp. Macmillan. £6.95.  
0333364546

Riding a bicycle, ex-policeman Birdie Linneit chases a Jaguar containing his divorced wife, his daughter and the wife's new boy friend across France to a tourist camp calling itself the Villa Zoe (Zestful, Outgoing, Energized). There things get a bit complicated, what with a sexy blonde starlet from a soap opera, her slusher agent, a corpse in the alghotherapy tank, and a pleasantly athletic girl called Nimue. An interesting first novel: well organized, with a good background, sparkly, and amusingly written.

DAVID WILLIAMS  
Adventure for Treasure  
226pp. Collins. £6.95.  
0002313898

When Howard J. Crabtree Inc of New York makes a £2 million bid for the London advertising agency Rorch, Timms and Bander, Mark Treasure, David Williams's merchant banker hero, is naturally drawn into the struggle, since his bank owns a good slice of RTB. And he's thus well placed to put his crime-solving talent

And so Xavier, like many another hero reared on a Gothic diet, turns his face resolutely towards the light, at the cost, admittedly, of about a brain-fever, and some strategic amnesia. Only to be summoned back to Winterthurn a few years later to investigate a quite different, equally inexplicable crime, again connected (as it turns out) with his own flesh and blood. What Oates is doing, in leisurely and titillating fashion, is concocting radically ambiguous, undecidable stories, in which empirical hopes and metaphysical fears encounter each other head on, inscribed in one and the same set of signs. Xavier means, at his most heroic moments, to save the world for sanity:

God himself is a presence underlying, and giving unity to, all ostensibly discrete phenomena: what appears to the untutored eye as chaos may be read, by the proper intelligence, and by the proper faith, as Order.

He takes his motto from Emerson – "I make my circumstance". But Winterthurn, in its perverse backwardness, points towards some original tangle of sin, to do with sexuality, birth and race. Whenever Xavier returns home his manly (not to say Godly) assumptions are cruelly travestied, "translated" into unreason. Not least by his half-cousin Perdita, the most fascinating member of his ill-fated family, who learnedly subscribes to all the truisms of misogyny – "Woman is but half human (Aristotle and Hippocrates)" – and mocks the great detective's innocence of the fundamental Secret, that order is built on negation:

Woman is all that man is not . . . Nay, I jest. My fevered pulses jest. 'Tis the moon's sly tide. I mean the secret Female tide. I mean, – but I dare not whisper what I mean, for fear of making you bluish

As the interwoven tales proliferate, Ms Oates offers her hero – and her reader – a subversive proposition: that perhaps what we really desire is not the solution, but just this teasing postponement, this slightly dizzying frustration; not clarity, but mystery itself. Mystery is at once older, and newer, than the cult of fact, after all. And she adds mystification to mystery (rather in the spirit of adding insult to injury) by a virtuoso display of digressive skill, and a fetishistic lushness of description, with clothes, furniture and settings all immaculately in period (down to the last tell-tale scratches and stains) and all indefinitely but unmistakably fake. Characters, too, especially minor ones, are as "round" as those of Balzac or Dickens, and quite as unreal – for instance, the Winterthurn ladies' doctor (aptly named "Hatch") whose discretion in matters like the "Female tide" repeatedly frustrates the forensic searches of the police, when they try to discover (say) whose blood is whose. Echoes of famous unsolved crimes of the time – Jack the Ripper, the Lizzie Borden case – add a sense of eerie familiarity and illusionist "depth".

Small wonder that Xavier begins to suffer from "verigo of the soul" and an intermittent, crazy suspicion that perhaps he himself, in one of his expert disguises, may have been somehow responsible for the crimes in question. Though the case that persuades him to retire from the detection business for good – the one involving the blood-stained bridal gown – centres on Perdita. She is, against all reason, the love of his life, and in a desperate climactic gesture he surrenders (yet again, on purpose) to brain-fever and forgetfulness, rather than know what she has done. He thus awards himself a happy ending, and dwindles at the last into the two dimensions of the words on the page, neither gentleman nor detective any longer. Just a figment of his author's imagination. Perhaps it's because of her maternal tone about all this (the novel is full of birth images, as of course was *Frankenstein*) that Ms Oates encounters fastidious objections. However, it is her shockingly detailed curiosity about the genesis of illusion that makes her special. Her theory is all practice, she makes reading once again a kind of vice.

## Saul Bellow HIM WITH HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH and Other Stories

"The most magical piece in the collection *What Kind of a Day Did You Have?* ... is immensely funny, and it throws the other four pieces into brilliant relief ... a marvellous book." *Jonathan Raban, Sunday Times*

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"This superb collection shows Saul Bellow at the very peak of his talent. Indeed, the novella *What Kind of Day Did You Have?* is not only the best thing in the book but one of his undoubted masterpieces." *Paul Bailey, Standard*

"It is superb – Bellow at his best." *Selina Hastings, Daily Telegraph*  
An Allison Press Book £8.95

## George Orwell NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR The Facsimile Edited by Peter Davison

"It's beautifully produced, modestly priced and incidentally confounds Orwell's claim that this was an 'Unbelievably bad MS' – there's little sign of haste, tiredness or untidiness." *Blake Morrison, Observer*

"The facsimile edition is full of amazing things. For example ... the famous date is not even a second thought. It was a third thought. First it was 1980, then 1982 and only in the third go did it become 1984. The end result is of effortless ease." *Stanley Reynolds, Punch*

£25.00

Secker & Warburg







# Soulfully fraternizing

J. R. Vincent

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS  
Memoirs  
Edited by Phyllis Grosskurth  
319pp. Hutchinson. £14.95.  
0091541700

John Addington Symonds (1840-93) never quite entered the Victorian pantheon. Instead, he loiters pensively in the shade reserved for those whose fame rests mainly on their sexual predilections. His *Memoirs*, written with eventual publication in mind, imply that he mattered more for what he was than what he did.

In this he was not entirely correct. His *History of the Italian Renaissance* (seven volumes, 1875-86) launched *Kulturgeschichte* in England. His misfortune was to appear in competition with Pater's prose and Burckhardt's mythic power. Prolific in lesser writings, he covered everything from Dante to Whitman, and his translation made Cellini virtually an English author. Much of the literary landscape that we now take for granted goes back ultimately to Symonds's labours.

Symonds came from a puritan family connected for five generations with medicine, but his father, a Bristol physician, was a man of parts as well as wealth, being a versifier, a speculative thinker, a lecturer on forensic medicine, with special interests in the psychology of insanity and the interpretation of dreams. As Bristol men touched the American mainland before Columbus, so they touched the shores of the unconscious before Freud.

That young Symonds should rise in the intellectual aristocracy was hardly surprising. (A sister married T. H. Green, the Oxford philosopher.) Educated at Harrow and Balliol, he gained a double first in classics under Jowett. He won the usual University trophies, like the Newdigate, and a prize fellowship at Magdalen. He knew the best minds of his day even as a freshman, and was particularly in the confidence of the great Latinist Conington, whose remains he edited in the Oxford of his early days. Symonds was the coming man.

After a few months as a Magdalen don, his health broke, never fully recovering. He spent the rest of his life as a literary man of private means, much of it abroad and away from libraries. He never had a job. He lies buried in Rome, close to Shelley, with an epitaph on his grave composed by Jowett.

His *Memoirs* tell of sexual awakenings, not intellectual development. Symonds's mother died when he was four. By the age of eight, he was enjoying daydreams of naked sailors subjecting him to sexual abuse as their "Dirty Pig". Reading *Venus and Adonis* a little later, he yearned to be Venus. The youth of Clifton's Dissenting elite introduced him to oral sex at an early age; this he did not enjoy. At Harrow, he was equally priggish about abandoned lust in the dorm, of which he gives a lurid account. His first love was for a Bristol cathedral choir-boy (two kisses in two years) and was broken up by his father, mainly because of their inequality of social position. His second love was for a naughtier Bristol choirboy. "I knew that he was waiting to assuage my soul's thirst. But I refrained."

So it goes on. Having refrained in Bristol and at Harrow, Symonds went on refraining at Oxford. Then followed three years of nervous breakdown, caused, he suggests, by his old trouble. Without apology, he then describes how he threw himself into the pursuit of normality. A fifteen-year-old Swiss maid in a mountain inn is tenderly recalled, whereas his courtship of the future Mrs Symonds is lost in the mists. Marrying young, at twenty-four, he went to work with it will, and begot four children: Mrs Symonds was only too glad when amicable separation saved her from another four. Symonds, it appears, was not so much unhappily married, as lacking the ideal passion of his dreams. The odd thing is that he thought this predicament set him apart from the rest of mankind.

His married life had, so to say, an external buttress: Norman, a Clifton College schoolboy (Symonds made it his duty to broaden the horizons of Dr Percival's Sixth). Here was ideal passion at last; and the relationship was broadly creditable to both parties. Symonds

continued to refrain from grossness, though Victorian values permitted foreign holidays in double beds, with torrid embraces thrown in. Norman went on to Balliol, emerging later as a solid Victorian family man living at Northcote Road, Clifton.

Still, Symonds did not get properly down to work until 1877, when at the late age of thirty-seven a chance suggestion from a friend led him to spend an afternoon with a soldier in a Regent's Park male brothel. Thereafter, wasted youth was more than made up for by a full middle age. Armies of Swiss peasants and Venetian gondoliers marched through his bedroom. There were no ideal passions, but there was everything else. "I am writing these passages in my study", Symonds concludes. "At the window sits a young peasant, by whose side I slept last night. Bewildering contradictions, tending to madness."

Symonds cannot quite hide his boredom with the real thing. Mediterranean moral naturalism could not compete in intensity with English spiritual anxiety, with "the dignity of tragic suffering" that Symonds wanted to see in his isolation. Though the *DNB* artlessly remarks, "No trait in his nature was more marked than his readiness to fraternise with peasants and artisans", all of whom seem to have been hearty followers of Whitman's ideal of comradeship, he could hardly discuss the classics with them as he had done with Norman.

One episode stands apart from the rest. This is Symonds's destruction of his great headmaster, Dr Vaughan, who was engaged in an affair with the house tart. This would hardly have mattered, had not Dr Vaughan expressed his feelings in letters which found their way into



Symonds's hands. Symonds's father forced Vaughan into discreet retirement, though Mrs Vaughan argued that her husband's frailty did not make him any less effective as a head. Symonds felt uneasy about the episode in later life, as well he might. But consider the alternative: if Dr Vaughan, a rising man in the Church, had not been forced to refuse preferment, it might have been an Archbishop rather than a playwright who was the focus of the homosexual scandal of the century. And what harm that would have done to the causes Symonds espoused!

Symonds's *Memoirs* are a plea of not guilty to posterity, a message of unqualified self-justification. They are also a lament - but for what? That his woes were exceptional is harder to accept. Adolescent heartbreak? The common lot. Self-denial at Oxford? The common lot. A marriage which worked up to a point? The common lot. Legal hostility? But Symonds was untroubled by bobby or blackmailer. (This was an age when the Bristol Watch Committee reprimanded a constable for arresting a loiterer on the grounds "that if such things were done, nobody knew who would be safe".) Lack of esteem from contemporaries? He enjoyed the best literary society of his time, from Sidgwick to R. L. Stevenson. As for the usual Housman-like complaint that attractive normal men were not interested in his approaches,

Symonds found they fell into his arms. *Pas d'argent, pas de Suisses*, perhaps; Symonds was a big man in Davos. His fieldwork was a success. If he failed to find an ideal passion, if he wanted the perfect soulmate, then that too is the common lot. His problem was *homoeroticism*, not homosexuality.

Or was it? Why was Symonds both so physically demanding and so soulfully impotent? There may be a simple answer, a very Victorian answer: at fifteen, on his father's advice, he "entirely abandoned onanism", and moreover was treated by his father for his "nocturnal pollutions", which he evidently regarded as harmful, with the stimulants quinine and strychnine. This truly Gladstonian mixture of self-suppression and stimulation would unhinge any mind. If he was at a fever pitch of romantic feeling throughout life, the reason is not hard to grasp.

We do not rub our eyes at this memoir. It gathers into one text what has previously been before us in fragments. H. F. Brown's life of Symonds (1895) made discreet use of the

## John's Principal Boy

Victoria Glendinning

RICHARD ORMROD  
Una Troubridge: The friend of Radclyffe Hall  
340pp. Cape. £10.95.  
0224021796

No one has heard of Margot Elena Gertrude Taylor, born into rather precarious gentility in Kensington in 1887; she was always called Una, and became famous under her married name as the friend and lover of Radclyffe Hall, the distinguished author and pioneer of literary candour in matters of sexual deviance. The prosecution of *The Well of Loneliness* is a central set-piece in this book; Una Troubridge's personality, perpetually overshadowed by her famous friend's, is sometimes in danger of total eclipse. Marguerite Radclyffe Hall, known as "John", was a very dominating life-partner, while Una was masochistic and clinging - though autocratic and "every inch a lady" with outsiders. She found her *métier* in tending and protecting John's "genius".

Una had made a promising start as an artist and sculptor, and is the only person to have modelled Nijinsky from the life. But she married young; Ernest Troubridge was a middle-aged widower with three teenage children and a naval career that took him abroad for months at a time. Una took refuge in minor ailments, diagnosed as nervous in origin even at the time. These cannot all have been due to marital stress or sexual mismatching; even when she left him to live with Radclyffe Hall she was constantly beset by disorders below the belt - colitis, haemorrhoids, fibroids and distressing infections that may have been gonorrhoea inherited from her naval husband. These unfortunate ailments give rise to some unconscious humour, as when the two women attend a Mass of Thanksgiving to celebrate a successful operation on Una's piles.

The conscious humour is less satisfactory. Richard Ormrod has adopted Una's own style of appending exclamation marks to his most unremarkable observations, a habit made all the more distracting by his nudging use of the signpost-words "amusing" or "humorous" in leading up to any mildly lighthearted quotation. He quotes Una's description of a "splendidly handsome and properly upholstered Principal Boy" whom she adored in a pantomime at the age of ten; Radclyffe Hall, later, is archly referred to by him as "Una's Principal Boy".

Life on the whole was not amusing for Una and her Principal Boy, though Ormrod conveys effectively the peculiarly skittish atmosphere prevalent in lesbian social circles in the 1920s: a mixture of adolescent jokiness, funny nicknames, fancy dress, rows and reconciliations, expensive presents, Catholicism, dogs, silliness, headaches - and a good deal of bravado, which is an aspect of courage.

When Una met John, the latter was living with Mabel Batten, known as "Ladye", who was older and something of an invalid. Ladye dropped dead at dinner during a quarrel over Una and John, consumed with guilt and

memoir. Phyllis Grosskurth's modern biography used the memoir to good effect, its ticular spilling the beans about Dr Vaughan. The lusts of Harrow have been done full page by John Chandos in his *Boys Together* (1982) which takes Symonds as source. Richard Ormrod's *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (1980) deals with the relation between classical scholarship and sexual deviance in the age of Jowett. Mark Girouard's *The Age of Chivalry* has an excellent chapter on Clifton College the time when Symonds was enriching his mind. The plums have been extracted; what is more the full impact of Symonds's agonized statement, the first of its kind, that homoeroticism neither neurotic nor morally wanting.

Symonds's *métier*, let us recall, was the achievement of his sexual propaganda, not even the founding of a subculture, but a conceptual revolution - a demand for parity of esteem, if not superiority, a reinterpretation of licentiousness in terms of the Victorian cultural apparatus.

John and Una lived *à trois* with the memory of Ladye, with whom they communicated through a medium for twenty years. Long after, when Una, the established but sometimes neglected "wife", fell ill in France, the time some repeated itself in an ironic way. John passionately in love with Una's nurse, and his stormy relationship darkened the lives of all three until John died. So Una really never had John to herself, though she accepted the carnate Ladye, and when John told her she could be buried together in the vault in Highgate where Ladye already lay, she wrote "I can never be really unhappy again."

Una led a life of "watching, serving, subordinating everything" to the requirements of John and her writing. As to John: "Fling and philandering seems to have been basic to her nature, which in this respect approached to most men's." Leaving aside the beg question about "most men", it does seem Ormrod's interpretation, as if the two women incorporated the polar extremes of the feminine and masculine stereotypes of their period.

The book that this one must be compared with is Lovat Dickson's *Radclyffe Hall and the Well of Loneliness* (1975) - a work that Ormrod refers to as infrequently as he does can. Lovat Dickson was Una Troubridge's literary executor; his book, like this one, is a reality a biography of both the women. Lovat Dickson's was a better book because he was a better writer, and because he had a better general knowledge of literature and history. Ormrod is capable of writing "disinterestedly", and of including Charlotte Yonge in a list of popular novelists of the 1920s.

It is possible nevertheless to feel that Ormrod that Lovat Dickson should not have the last word. He approached his subject from an initial position of distaste (later modified, referring to their "unholy love"). He duly cribbed Una's gynaeological woes to the "sexual practices of lesbianism", which is pretty punitive; more justifiably, he was sharply critical of Una's neglect of her daughter by Troubridge. Ormrod is avowedly partisan.

He also takes the story further, up to Una's death, and he has had the use of more material. Una's later diaries, which were left with Richard Lemeni, the opera singer to whom she transferred her devotion after John's death, has many unpublished autobiographical fragments; and the almost daily diary-letters she wrote to John during her "widowhood", which remained, necessarily, unpublished.

But the story both biographers tell is essentially the same, and Una's side of it has high limitations. Mr Ormrod asks on his last page: "Of what significance was her life, and for what should we remember her?" He answers by giving her courage in the face of censure and disapproval, and her "innate radicalism", her primary qualities, he writes, were those of "a feminine woman who wanted to love and be loved. That was, for her, the ecstatic experience." She wished to be remembered as "the friend of Radclyffe Hall". No one can say that this wish has not been fulfilled.

# Shuffling, cutting, dealing, playing

S. Schoenbaum

SYLVIA FREEDMAN  
Poor Penelope: Lady Penelope Rich, an Elizabethan woman  
230pp. The Kensal Press. £10.50.  
0946041202

In her own day almost everybody recognized that Penelope Rich was someone special. The family connection helped. Her father, Walter Devereux, was able to claim royal descent from the Plantagenets. Her extraordinary mother, Lettice, was Queen Elizabeth's first cousin and, as one of her first Maids of Honour, was charged with (among other responsibilities) bearing Her Majesty's mantle and carrying the cup of grace during dinner. Lettice outlived three husbands, including the reigning favourite, the Earl of Leicester, and in old age walked a mile each morning, before dying at the age of ninety-four. Her eldest child, Penelope, was a great beauty, with black eyes and golden hair. She sang, she danced, she played the lute; she corresponded in French, Spanish and Latin - King James himself "commended much the fineness of her wit, the invention and well-writing" of her letters. Penelope went on to perform in Court masques, and was appropriately enough (for she had two celebrated lovers) the Goddess of Love in Samuel Daniel's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*. Her brother Robert was the Queen's disgraced darling, the second Earl of Essex who on February 8, 1601, led his foolish, futile uprising. Penelope was close to him; she subscribes one letter, "Your sister that most infinitely loves you, Penelope Rich". The long inventory of rebels indicted for treason names Lady Rich near the head of the list. Two days after the sentence of execution was passed upon him, Essex privately incriminated his sister, blaming her for having goaded him on. Yet she remained untouched. Such a personality in such an age is an excellent subject for the short biography which Sylvia Freedman has now given us.

In those days marriage was more a treaty between families than a free contract between individuals. Daughters were expected to be docile. Penelope was not. As a contemporary wrote of her, "A lady of great birth and virtue, being in the power of her friends, was by them married against her will unto one against whom she did protest at the very solemnity and ever after." Ever after, Penelope detested her mate, the rich Lord Rich, an unlettered Puritan Justice of the Peace, a bully but a great Essex landholder. Penelope had eleven children all told, nine of whom survived, of them five by her husband. The rest were born out of wedlock. Her first lover was the most idolized young man of the age, Sir Philip Sidney. Under other circumstances they might have married. As things worked out, Sidney immortalized Penelope as the Stella of his sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella*. That Lady Rich was Sidney's innamorata admits of no question. Dying at Zutphen after giving a poor soldier his only bottle, Sidney recalled the youthful vanity in which he had taken guilty delight: "It was my Lady Rich. But I rid myself of it, and presently my joy and comfort returned within a few hours." Three of the sonnets (24,35,37) allude to the mistress's married name. As an earlier biographer quaintly puts it, "These gifts of verse, passionate, tender, enchanting, are like undying wreaths and posies to her person and her heart - garlands and bouquets of immortal blossom, of gems in which the stars sparkle for all time."

The cultural establishment paid tribute to Penelope. "Lady Rich Her Galliard" was dedicated to her by John Dowland, and William Byrd addressed her in his *Songs of Sundry Natures*. Nicholas Hilliard limned Penelope in a miniature which has not survived, but Henry Constable paid poetic tribute to both the painting and the subject, with her "black sparkling eyes" (see Mary Edmond's excellent *Hilliard and Oliver*). John Florio dedicated his translation of Montaigne's *Essays* to her, and Bartholomew Young, in offering his translation of Montaigne's Spanish romance *Diana*, acclaimed her "magnificent mind wherein all virtues have their proper seat". The young John Ford dedicated his *Fame's Memorial* to "his heart's shining goddess".

The Sidney affair was transient. Penelope's long-lasting love was Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, the military hero who brought to heel the Irish rebel Tyrone, and at Kinsale, on Christmas Eve, 1601, defeated the combined Irish and Spanish forces with the loss of only six English lives. Spain was at last ready to sue for peace, and Tyrone now knelt before the Queen to beg for pardon. "Penelope had the unique distinction", Ms Freedman writes, "of having been chosen by two of the greatest men of her day." But surely she chose them as well? Sexism rears its head in the most unexpected contexts.

After twenty-two years of marriage, it was time for Rich to call it quits, and Penelope facilitated the divorce proceedings by acknowledging the adultery which the whole world knew. Divorce was a Pyrrhic victory for her, though, for the judges forbade either of the lovers (while the other was alive) to contract a marriage. They married anyway. Society, which had blinked at their open cohabitation, branded Penelope, now Countess of Devonshire, a harlot and mercenary schemer. When she died, in her forty-fourth year, she received obscure burial. A reported epitaph reads:

Here lieth Penelope or my Lady Rich  
Or my Lady of Devonshire, I know not which.  
She shuffled, she cut, she dealt, she played,

## Truly fictitious

Julia Briggs

JUDITH H. ANDERSON  
Biographical Truth: The representation of historical persons in Tudor-Stuart writing  
243pp. Yale University Press. £20.  
0300030851

Modern biography is commonly concerned to probe the delicate and sometimes painful gap between what we would like to be and what we really are, no doubt as part of a wider movement to demystify society's idols, to inspect their feet of clay rather than admire their ineffable glows. Though comparatively recent, this tendency has encouraged critical reappraisals of the great biographies of the past that increasingly focus upon their failure to achieve the level of scientific detachment or historical accuracy that would be aimed at in a modern biography. As a critical approach this one looks obvious and inappropriate, but if it can also be used to point up the significantly different assumptions of the past it may have a contribution to make. David Novarr's revisionist reading of Walton's life of Donne exposed his cavalier treatment and his conscious artistry, as he introduced a series of minor changes from one edition to the next - changes that seldom, if ever, advanced the accuracy of his account. Yet Walton and Donne held certain ideals in common, and Walton perpetuated the self-image of Donne's later years; he

understood Donne better, even though he knew less about him, than we do. One stone contains her: this death can do, which in her life was not content with two.

In the records of the parish church of All Hallows, Barking, by the Tower, Sylvia Freedman tracked down the entry, dated October 7, 1607, for "A Lady Devereux". Her diligence has brought other rewards, small perhaps but rewards none the less. She has been able to redate the birth of the last Mountjoy child, Penelope, and in the unpublished parish register of St Clement Danes Church she has found the baptism entry for another offspring, a son Scipio, not previously recorded by students. Ms Freedman argues ingeniously, and to my mind persuasively, that the Syon House portrait labelled "Lettice Knollys" is actually of Lady Dorothy Devereux, Penelope Rich's sister. Trained in the law, the author finds her way skilfully through the legal battles, in no fewer than six courts, over Mountjoy's will and other documents pertinent to the estate. She is on less firm ground in her Yatesian view of the topical resonances of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but concludes that "The extent of the influence of the Essex circle on Shakespeare is a matter of pure conjecture". True, Freedman thinks, interestingly, that Penelope may be the inspiration behind Vittoria Corombona, the passionate, courageous heroine of Webster's

*White Devil*. There are similarities - both women had weak and foolish husbands - both were accused of being whores - but of course literature and life are filled with cunning parallels, and Webster's play was based on actual, fairly recent, events in Italian history, the numerous versions of which Professor Gunnar Boklund has thoughtfully considered in his *Sources of "The White Devil"* (1957). Freedman indicates in a note that she has made the Penelope connection the subject of a separate article. I look forward to seeing what she has to say.

Although engagingly unpretentious, this book is less than elegantly written. It appears also to have been carelessly copy-edited, and even more carelessly proof-read. There are misspellings - "her's", "born" (for "borne") - and Freedman's prose is not impeccably grammatical ("These hangings was..."). The index is inadequate. Perhaps she was aiming to engage the general reader, whoever that reader may be these days. Still, the specialist will do well not to pass up *Poor Penelope*. Poor Penelope? "She deserves our admiration", Ms Freedman concludes, "for the strength of character which enabled her to control her own life, refusing to conform to the accepted code, to be manipulated or suppressed." That's a fair verdict.

understood Donne better, even though he knew less about him, than we do.

It is the wider failure of this historical imagination implicit in the revisionist approach that Judith Anderson questions in her *Biographical Truth*. Conscious of the injustice done to early lives in exposing their failure to be modern biographies, she sets out to establish their truth, not to mere facts, but to more important, because more masterful, fictions. Her choice of lives is unsurprising - the adulterous is illustrated by Roper's life of More and Cavendish's life of Wolsey, the critical by More's *History of Richard III* and Shakespeare's *Richard III* and *Henry VIII*, and the more neutral view by Bacon's life of Henry VII. Her thesis, that each of these is conceived as a work of art, its parts subordinated to a single, imposed or artificial version of its subject, is persuasive; at best, her analyses bring out underlying structures and patterns of imagery and she interestingly connects More's foregrounding of particular figures in his history with the technique used in Holbein's group portrait of More's household. Her account of Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* is sensitive, but her discussion of this play, and of the various lives, takes place in a historical vacuum: Henry VIII was judged a tyrant - implicitly by Wyatt and Surrey, explicitly by Raleigh - but no sense of the range of reactions to this difficult ruler ever really emerges.

Professor Anderson's frequent appeals to "truth" beg more questions than they resolve, since the perception of truth at any given point has a cultural dimension. She cites with approval Virginia Woolf's observation that "the life which is increasingly real to us is the fictitious life", adding that this "might be thought to describe a much earlier period". But Virginia Woolf's notion of pervasive fictiveness is surely characteristically modern, deriving from a tradition of fiction writing and reading that scarcely existed in the sixteenth century. It seems unlikely that Renaissance life-writers deliberately set out to re-create "fictive truths", despite their tendency to distort facts or subordinate them to a wider conception; it is in any case difficult at this distance to distinguish which facts had the status of facts. In making a particular life conform to a series of expectations or ideals, early biographers were probably not conscious of falsifying; expectations that may appear as fictions to us were to their own age self-evident truths.

The key question, therefore, is *How did the Renaissance life-writer perceive his function in relation to his subject?* Crucial though this problem is, Anderson never adequately discusses it and its omission substantially reduces the scope and interest of her book; so that her best observations remain unsupported by serious argument. The Renaissance involved a general reassessment of the importance of history and biography as sources for the study of mankind and it is only within the considered context of that reassessment that a study of particular lives can assume significance.

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Literature

John Addington Symonds



# Manliness is all

## James Campbell

JOHN RAEBURN  
*Fame Became of Him: Hemingway as Public Writer*  
 231pp. Indiana University Press.  
 \$17.50.  
 0253126908  
 JAMES NAGEL (Editor)  
*Ernest Hemingway: The writer in context*  
 244pp. University of Wisconsin Press. \$27.50.  
 0299097404  
 FREDERIC JOSEPH SVOBODA  
*Hemingway and "The Sun Also Rises": The crafting of a style*  
 148pp. University Press of Kansas. \$19.95.  
 0700602283

"When wouldn't I rather shoot than write?" Hemingway asked his friend Henry Strater in a letter in 1932. "It implies no criticism of a guy's work that he would be . . . willing to knock off for a trip." That was the year in which Hemingway lost his true subject matter, for by then the echoes of the war which had produced the lost generation had faded, even to his ears, forcing him to look for substitutes. His treatise on bullfighting, *Death in the Afternoon*, had been published in the spring and during the next winter he managed to combine shooting and writing by going on safari in order to research *Green Hills of Africa*. With that book the image of someone who actually had adventures on the way to the typewriter, rather than merely imagining them, became fixed for ever in the public mind. John Raeburn's *Fame Became of Him* shows how the public image evolved, what Hemingway did to deserve it, and how "pursuing ends other than his art" damaged the artist.

From his first success onwards, Hemingway developed a split personality, whereby he could plead with the press and public to be left in peace with his work, but at the same time satisfy their desire for good copy. He learned the art of knife-throwing from the Italian American who was teaching an Austrian prisoner of war to practise on; he slept with Mae Harl; he had performed professionally in both bull and boxing-ring and had saved John Dos Passos from death in the former. Some of these stories were complete fabrication, some of them partly so, and some were originally true but had been distorted. All of them contributed to the legend, the core of which — that Hemingway himself was more brave and accomplished than any of his literary creations — he actively encouraged.

In the opening chapters of *Green Hills of Africa*, as Professor Raeburn points out, Hemingway emphasizes the satisfactory way in which he has combined the roles of physical and artistic champion at least nine times. At that stage some degree of self-congratulation was forgivable, although the insistence betrays his unease. He was in his mid-thirties and his fictional work of the previous decade — *In Our Time*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Men Without Women* and *A Farewell to Arms* — had made him the most successful and respected American writer of the period. Deprived of a war, however, he transferred the codes evolved during his experience of real violence to the ritual violence of sport, in which grace under pressure and all the other components of the Hemingway code finally come to parody themselves. As a result, Hemingway began to seem like his own ugliest creation.

The truth is that he really was brave and accomplished in war, in sport and other masculine pursuits; but the flaw in the legend is that whereas the typical Hemingway hero is a rather sensitive being — a fact too easily overlooked — the public Hemingway was supposed to be invulnerable. What the magazine version of his accomplishments leaves out is the deep psychological unease which made them necessary: the parental snubs — parcels containing presents of his early books were returned to him unopened — the fear of impotence and the suggestion of repressed homosexuality, the obsession with death.

The growing need to cause death rather than merely describe its effects (in the letter to Strater he mentions killing Bull elk, "fine bucks", an eagle, "a hell of a big bear", rams, pheasants, barracuda, tuna, marlin and much more) blinded Hemingway to the fact, appar-

rent to Edmund Wilson and others, that where writing was concerned he was using the exquisite instrument he had fashioned in the 1920s for the playing of bad tunes in the 30s. But the audience craved it, and he responded: "He was insensibly forced by his fame", Raeburn writes, "he could not resist speaking in its terms."

So he deserved all he got? Almost, but not quite. Raeburn shows how Hemingway's fame differed from that of any writer who had gone before. He was the first internationally famous novelist in the age when the cinema and newspapers began to confuse private personality with public performance. Moreover, magazines felt free to mutilate his writings and invade his home in any way they chose. See "presented plot summaries of 'The Light of the World', 'The Battler' and 'The Killers' as accounts of his own experience", while *Vogue* sent a photographer and model to his Cuban residence on the pretext of taking some fashion shots, then coaxed Hemingway, dressed in nothing but shorts, into posing with the model, and printed the resulting pictures.

The latter story is referred to in a footnote to James D. Brash's article on Hemingway and Malcolm Cowley in *Ernest Hemingway: The writer in context*, one of few rewards in a collection which suffers from being the proceedings of a symposium, held at Northeastern University in 1982. The "context", presumably, is the collection of Hemingway material recently catalogued and made available in the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, which many of the academic contributors have made use of in order to write about women in the novels, the making of *Death in the Afternoon*, and Hemingway's relationship with Pound and Faulkner, among other subjects. But the best pieces are those which set out to be no more than talks. Charles Scribner Jr., Hemingway's last editor, recalls his magnanimity, good manners and how carefully he attended to technical details, whether of a foreign language or the anatomy of a horse. Tom Stoppard serves up a decent imitation of early Hemingway and then compares it with the real thing in order to make some nice points about technique.

He also includes an amusing aside concerning an article published in the *Fitzgerald Hemingway Annual*, beginning: "Statistics supply the one asset in which literary criticism, especially stylistic criticism, has always been woefully deficient-proof", which then proceeds to analyse "Big Two-Hearted River" and Fitzgerald's "The Rich Boy" in terms of the average number of words in a sentence and the incidence of "monosyllabic substantives" in each.

## Epic of a lifetime

### Nigel Wheale

BARRY AHEARN  
*Zukofsky's "A": An introduction*  
 254pp. University of California Press. £17.  
 0520043782

Barry Ahearn's *Introduction* to Louis Zukofsky's *A* attempts to explicate a long poem that was virtually unknown for thirty years, and which continues to have equivocal status. Ahearn's first chapter describes Zukofsky's childhood in New York's crowded Lower East Side, during which he absorbed Shakespeare, Ibsen, Strindberg and Tolstoy — all in Yiddish. In Ahearn's view this culturally diverse early experience intimately marked the poet's subsequent writing.

During the mid-1920s Zukofsky achieved a fresh, broken-lined style in the best manner of William Carlos Williams's *Spring and All*, as for instance in his "29 Poems". Ahearn provides some useful philosophical background to Zukofsky's development as a poet, drawing from the works of John Dewey and A. N. Whitehead, then in vogue; avant-garde influences including Apollinaire and the fertile confusions of "Simultanism".

At this time Zukofsky was writing complex and intelligent lyrics: from his childhood in the ghetto came a sense of political tensions and personal insecurity; from his time at Columbia, an intellectual anguish as to what "knowledge" might be. During 1930 Zukofsky collaborated

Unfortunately, Stoppard's cautionary joke went unheeded by some of the other participants. In an otherwise informative investigation of the various manuscripts of "Ten Indians", Paul Smith divides the story into two before establishing tables to compare the structure of dialogues "A, B and C" and the narrative transitions in each half. Millicent Bell's opaque language in her discussion of *A Farewell to Arms* reads all the worse for having as its ostensible subject the writer of the century's clearest prose. When Max Westbrook discusses the nervous agony of Grace Hemingway, his mother — a "fine human being" — under the title "Grace Under Pressure", one is ready to believe that, their constant misuse of him notwithstanding, the media were less dangerous to Hemingway than the critics.

Frederic Joseph Svoboda does not enter that category. Sifting through the early drafts of *The Sun Also Rises*, he comes up with a number of interesting facts. For example, that material cut from the novel turned up thirty-five years later in *A Moveable Feast* (the Ford-Belloc-Crowley scene); that the title of the first draft was the one which British publishers have persisted with, "Fiesta"; that Hemingway laboured at his opening chapter for weeks, first of all writing it in the third person, then in a clumsy combination of third and first, until at last he found the proper voice of Jake Barnes. Other information was familiar from Matthew J. Bruccoli's *Scott and Ernest*, such as that the novel was in proof before Hemingway took Fitzgerald's advice — "Ernest I can't tell you the sense of disappointment that beginning with its elephantine facetiousness gave me" — and cut several thousand words of expository material to open with the immediate: "Robert Cohen was once middleweight boxing champion of Princeton . . ."

There were hints even then that he would one day rather shoot than write (a fine picture of 1925 shows him in action in a bullring), in Jake's fascination with sport and with the fight. Dr Svoboda rightly emphasizes that Jake is not Ernest and that the novel, despite being in some ways a *roman à clef*, is neither journalism nor autobiography; but one item of information provided by *Hemingway and The Sun Also Rises*, is irresistible in what it suggests about the man and the legend: on three pages of a manuscript draft, Jake — all of whose codes and actions were designed to compensate for his castration — appears under the name of "Hem".

Which may, of course, prove nothing at all. And — given the enduring freshness of the prose in that book, *In Our Time* and several others — it wouldn't much matter if it did.

with George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff and William Carlos Williams in elaborating an Objectivist poetics, and, more practically, founding the Objectivist Press; by Oppen's account "Objectivist" was Zukofsky's term, and he contributed significantly to the movement's practice output. However Oppen is nowhere mentioned in Ahearn's study — apart from one early cryptic reference — and material for the period after 1930 is disappointingly sparse.

The central part of Ahearn's book surveys *A*, on which Zukofsky worked intermittently from the late 1920s to the 1970s. Sections 1-7 of the epic cast about to define the nature and scope of such a poem, which is to be co-extensive with a life; sections 8-12 explore the political and personal confusions experienced in America during the Depression; sections 13-20 are presented as Zukofsky's own "Book of Job", and concern the obscure tribulations of family life during the 1950s and 60s; sections 21-24 attempt to conclude Zukofsky's life's poem. Ahearn provides a number of local insights, but his commentary ultimately avoids making a decisive assessment of *A*. Much more, surely, could have been made of the interesting project in *A*, 8-9, to bring together passages from *Das Kapital* and Spinoza's *Ethics*.

*A* is an intransigent modernist epic, and certainly not an uninteresting one. But to what extent is it also a garbled fake? Barry Ahearn's *Introduction* is often plodding and imprecise, so that the real questions about Zukofsky's poetry are never really confronted.

# Delta details

## Eric Homberger

EUDORA WELTY  
*One Writer's Beginnings*  
 104pp. Harvard University Press. £8.50.  
 0674339251

When in 1965, during the civil rights movement, Eudora Welty wrote that "Entering the hearts and minds of our own people is no harder now than it ever was", the most common response was a subdued sense of shock at a writer so little carried away by the dramatic struggles taking place around her.

The argument that Welty's work fails to register the great traumas of the age is a way of placing her "interest" as Southern, and therefore as regional. No myth-maker like Faulkner, her work stands or falls on the scene of place, the particular character of Mississippi. She understands her people with uncanny precision. Her brief story on the murder of Edgar Evans in 1963, "Where Is the Voice Coming From?", was a fine gesture of imaginative insight. When the killer was finally caught, Welty remarks in the preface to her collected stories, it was necessary to revise certain details in her wholly invented characterization, because they had been disturbingly close to the truth.

Looking back on the 1960s, Welty recently commented on the scale of the changes which came in the wake of the civil rights movement: "I think we've been through an experience which is more profound than we'd guessed, both black and white. Now we are both more open in a way than well, I had not experienced it because it had not happened. Now, seeing how much more there was communication than the wish, and the desire, at the heart, I feel I have more to learn now than I did to learn then."

The learning process continues. Mississippi is no longer the Demon Incarnate; young college students find cocaine a better high than civil rights; and there aren't all that many registered black voters in the South any more. But of the rich literature of the South in this period, Welty's stories and novels look the most likely to survive.

As the appreciation of her achievement deepens, and as her stories find more and more readers, the world which permeates her writing seems remote, even historical. She was born in 1909 in Jackson, Mississippi, the sleepy state capital in the United States, her parents having come to Jackson at the start of their married life from Ohio and West Virginia. Long family trips north from Mississippi to visit her relatives (it took a week to drive each way in the 1920s) gave Welty a sense of an "outside" world which she recalls vividly in the Harvard lectures which have now been published as *One Writer's Beginnings*.

Towns little or big had beginnings and ends, they reached to an edge and stopped, where the country began again as though the hadn't happened. They were intact and to themselves. You could see a town lying ahead in its whole, as definitely formed as a plate on a table. And your road entered and lay straight through the heart of it; you could see it all, laid out for your passage through. Towns, like people, had clear identities and your imagination could go out to meet them. You saw houses, yards, fields, and people busy in them, the people that had a life where they were. You could hear their bank checks striking, you could smell their bakeries. You would know those towns again, recognize the salient detail, see so close up. Nothing was blurred, and in passing along Main Street, slowed down from twenty-five to twenty miles an hour, you didn't miss anything on either side.

In a review of Welty's *Delta Wedding* in 1946, Isaac Rosenfeld argued that "the serious American writer cannot but be alienated from American society, close though he may be to it, and much though he may wish to belong". Rosenfeld could not understand how a Southern writer could "really and truly feel at home in his home." Welty was perhaps too polite, too much the Southern lady, to ask the same question of Rosenfeld's (and Saul Bellow's) Chicago. Received opinion has, for the most part, agreed with Rosenfeld, and it was Bellow, not Welty, who won the Nobel Prize. Taking Welty seriously would mean questioning the massive investment in modernism and alienation in American culture; *One Writer's Beginnings* is a reminder that the imagination can be as nourished by Jackson, Mississippi, as by Henry James's London, Kafka's Prague or Kundert's Brno.

# Speaking silently

## Roy Harris

MARGARET DEUCHAR  
*British Sign Language*  
 232pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95.  
 0710096437

A popular fallacy about the sign language used by the deaf is that it constitutes a natural, international system of communication, which simply bypasses the polyglot Babel of speech. There is something very primitive and even superstitious about this naive belief. Perhaps it reflects people's willingness to give credence to the reassuring notion that a benignly disposed God or Nature has compensated the deaf for their deafness by not visiting upon them the calamitous consequences of the great confusion of tongues. Thus the deaf alone would be privileged to know that primal state of communicational innocence whereof the Bible tells, "when all the earth was of one language".

Alas, no. Sign languages differ from one country to another, as spoken languages do. (In British Sign Language the word *England* is signed by rubbing one extended index finger with the other, whereas in Swedish Sign Language the name of this same country is signed by the thumb and index-finger clasping the chin. The signs for "good" and "bad" in Britain mean "male" and "female" in Japan. Furthermore, British Sign Language and American Sign Language differ to such an extent as to be considered mutually unintelligible.) The simple-minded idea that sign language is a kind

of visual interlingua is just one of a number of misconceptions which contribute to the double barrier isolating the deaf community from the rest of society. The deaf live not only behind the high wall of a serious physiological handicap, but also across the deep moat of society's ignorance about them.

Margaret Deuchar's book is an admirable attempt to bridge this moat of ignorance by providing the first clear, authoritative and accessible account of British Sign Language (BSL). She outlines the origin and use of BSL against the historical background of the education of the deaf from the seventeenth century onwards. The long legacy of theoretical conflicts, overlaid with an accretion of social prejudices, remains with us in the surviving controversy between "oralists" and "manualists". The use of sign language is still regarded by many parents and teachers as a mark of inferiority, to be avoided if at all possible. As recently as 1968, a Department of Education and Science report dismissed "signing as commonly used at present among the deaf adults and, even more, signing as it develops spontaneously among deaf children" as being "non-linguistic".

At least the publication of *British Sign Language* makes it unlikely that such a sweeping dismissal could ever be made again. A chapter on "The structure of BSL signs" demonstrates in detail how the individual gestures which BSL uses can be analysed as having a basic inventory of units and contrasts comparable to the phonological system of a spoken language.

appendixes listing words under types of semantic change, are varied, scholarly, enticing and unskimped; some hackneyed things are not pursued, but perhaps we could have expected *tattoo* as skin-decoration and not just drumming, the linked meanings of *giddy* and *enthusiastic* would have been educational, and it is almost innocent to omit that a juggernaut is now also a horrible great lorry: I wish we could be officially told here not to pronounce *licorice* as "lickerish", which is rude. The apparatus certainly allows the book to be consulted, but I think its true worth will be found in a leisurely reading. The authors suppose some knowledge on our part: "As the *al-* . . . might suggest, this word comes to us from Arabic". Readers who have never engaged in philology are going to be excited and, because great care is shown over a methodical layout, convinced by astonishing little families such as thumb / thigh / thousand / butter, the cab and the goat, the delirium and the shoemaker's last, brooch / brooch / brochure / brocade. Amon ("the hidden one")-Ra now hides in amino acid; *chalmers* is hardly non-sexist, since the *Et*ruscan loanword *persona* was feminine in Latin; and *female* isn't linguistically connected with *male*. The little essay on *eleven* and *twelve* takes us back from "one-left" and "two-left" to how many fingers and toes were available to people in different climates, but the stodgy *equip* withholds any neat conclusion. We are returned to times when a "place of worship" was a town of importance, and the foreword prepares us nicely for all the pejoration — on moral, social or aesthetic standards — by stressing that it is commoner than amelioration through the "linguistic equivalent of the doctrine of original sin".

A few small points might be objected to. Don't blame Wyolf for failing the shibboleth test with *sebolech*; the culprit is the turgid Nicholas Hereford in his awful Early Version. Don't rush to associate Guinevere (Welsh *Gwenhwyfar*) or Gwendolyn with OE *gwenig*; remember Welsh *gwen* "white". We still have a *clerk* in holy orders, to be *starved* with cold is by no means "obsolete" up North; Basque is still "spoken in part of . . . Spain". *groom* is related to OE *guma*, I have seen a "chymist" in Bury St Edmunds, a trillion at Avebury is still called the *Cove*, and Sir Gawain's temptress, straight from Birmingham, calls herself a *yunk* (think or "creature"). The first line of the last paragraph of p xlii is missing. Finally, you can have dominos with white tiles beating black pips, and not just vice versa.

For the rest, the 400 essays, supported by the index of about 6,000 cross-references and the

A further chapter on "The grammar of BSL" compares the procedures for combining individual signs to those operative in the sentences of spoken languages. BSL has its own "parts of speech". Moreover, these structural and functional similarities are not the result of any deliberate imitation of spoken English. BSL is not calqued upon English, even though it is forced into a parasitic relationship by social pressures. Because the deaf community in this country is a minority living with the larger linguistic community of those who speak English, the influence of English upon it is inevitable. It incorporates, for example, a set of signs for finger-spelling, which are comparable to names of letters of the alphabet. Ironically, this fact is doubtless in part responsible for another widespread misconception: that what deaf sign language provides is simply a way of "spelling words on your fingers". In short, on this view BSL is reduced to a kind of visual counterpart to the Morse Code.

Other chapters in the book compare BSL with American Sign Language, examine different varieties of BSL, comment on the badly documented processes by which deaf children manage to pick up sign language, and survey some of the problems involved in research into the use of sign language. Among the most interesting ideas which emerge is the comparison of sign languages to pidgins and creoles. This comparison likens the problems of the deaf to those of imported foreign labourers and others who find themselves in circumstances where they are obliged to create a communications system which will bridge the gap between individuals who share no common language.

Dr Deuchar writes from the viewpoint of a linguistic theorist, not a welfare worker. On the face of it, therefore, her study of BSL provides excellent ammunition to fire at those critics who give theoretical linguistics a bad press for failing to come to terms with the realities of communication in everyday life. Unfortunately, the academic situation which provides the context for this book is a little

more complex than that, and does not reflect quite as much credit upon the author's discipline. The interest which linguistic theorists currently take in systems of communication like BSL is not due to any enlightened catholicity of outlook. On the contrary, it is the direct result of certain rather parochial disputes within linguistics. These disputes surface time and again in *British Sign Language*, probably to the annoyance of those readers (almost certainly the majority) who are completely indifferent to the touchiness which linguists are inclined to display over whether or not to dignify a communication system with the ultimate verbal accolade of being recognized as a "language". For the academics, that may be a crucial matter: their jobs in linguistics may depend on it, or at least the fate of their university departments. For the deaf, it is neither here nor there: except — and the exception is not to be dismissed lightly — in so far as society increasingly puts its trust in "experts".

The lesson is that linguistic theorizing may do some good after all, albeit inadvertently. No one who has read this book will have any excuse for falling for the equation between deaf signing and gestural mime, nor any of the other confusions which result in the deaf being treated as second-class human beings, whose communicational competence is in doubt.

Just published is *A Dictionary of Computer Terms* compiled by Laura Darcy and Louise Boston (282pp. Fontana. Paperback. £2.95. 0 00 636801 8). These two members of the Computer Services Department of Cleveland State University aim to provide user friendly definitions for the increasing number of people dependent on computers, as well as a quick reference guide for professionals (through cross-referencing of terms that have not yet been standardized). From A (in the hexadecimal number system meaning 10 — but also an abbreviation for accumulator) to zone punch. Over 2,500 items are explained in (non-computerized) "sequential access method".



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# The theoretical years

A.P. Thirlwall

**RICHARD F. KAHN**  
*The Making of Keynes's General Theory*  
 305pp. Cambridge University Press. £20.  
 0521 25373 X

Lord Kahn, now seventy-nine, is one of the most distinguished English economists of the century. No one inside or outside Cambridge is better qualified to write the story of Keynes's act of creation. Kahn was a pupil of Keynes in 1928 (having taken first a degree in physics); he was the "heavenly messenger" of the Cambridge "circus", and he became his closest academic friend and confidant, spending much time at Keynes's country-house at Tilton and assisting first with the *Treatise on Money*, published in 1930, and then the *General Theory*. Kahn's book, based on his Mattioli Lectures given in Italy, and six years in the making, has been eagerly awaited by everyone interested in the Keynesian revolution, and the evolution of economic thought.

There are six lectures, published here with the ensuing discussion, and a short biography of Kahn himself. To put his subject in context, Kahn first discusses the "classical" precursors of Keynes, quoting extensively from Malthus, Mill, Ricardo and Marshall, and the influence of Dennis Robertson and Piero Sraffa on Cambridge economic thought. The second lecture is devoted to the Quantity Theory of Money and Keynes's long struggle to escape from it, which Kahn has difficulty in dating precisely. To begin with Keynes was a fanatical believer in the Quantity Theory. There is some wavering in the *Treatise*, but even in the *General Theory* he gives what he calls a generalized statement of the doctrine. Kahn dates his complete release from 1939 with the Preface to the French edition of the *General Theory*. Kahn himself had lost faith in it much earlier, in 1923, when he noted, while on holiday in Germany, that despite a strike by German bank-note printers, and with money severely rationed, prices continued to double every twenty-four hours.

The third, fourth and fifth lectures are devoted to the *Treatise on Money* and the transition from that to the *General Theory*; they represent the core of the book. Although they are fascinating in parts, I have to say that they contain no important revelations. In many ways, the magnificent *Collected Writings of Keynes*, inspired by the Royal Economic Society under the general editorship of Donald Moggridge, have stolen Kahn's thunder. Moreover, he is upduly coy in places. There is

very little by way of anecdotes or gossip. The most amusing story I can find is that of Hayek's lecture to the Marshall Society in 1931 (a précis of *Prices and Production*) which left the usually lively audience completely bewildered. Kahn felt he had to break the ice and asked: "Is it your view that if I went out tomorrow and bought a new overcoat, that would increase unemployment?" "Yes," said Hayek, "but it would take a very long mathematical argument to explain why." Keynes himself wrote of Hayek's *Prices and Production*, "it is an extraordinary example of how, starting with a mistake, a remorseless logician can end up in bedlam".

Keynes expressed dissatisfaction with the *Treatise on Money* before the ink was dry. To his mother he wrote: "Artistically it is a failure—I have changed my mind too much during the course of it for it to be a proper unity." He also realized that the concepts and methods he had used were ill-suited to the analysis of his policy preoccupation with unemployment. Don Patinkin has disputed the importance commonly attributed to the Cambridge "circus", formed in 1930 to discuss the *Treatise*, in assisting Keynes in the transition to the *General Theory*. Kahn's oblique response is that "he feels unable to arouse any feeling of passion

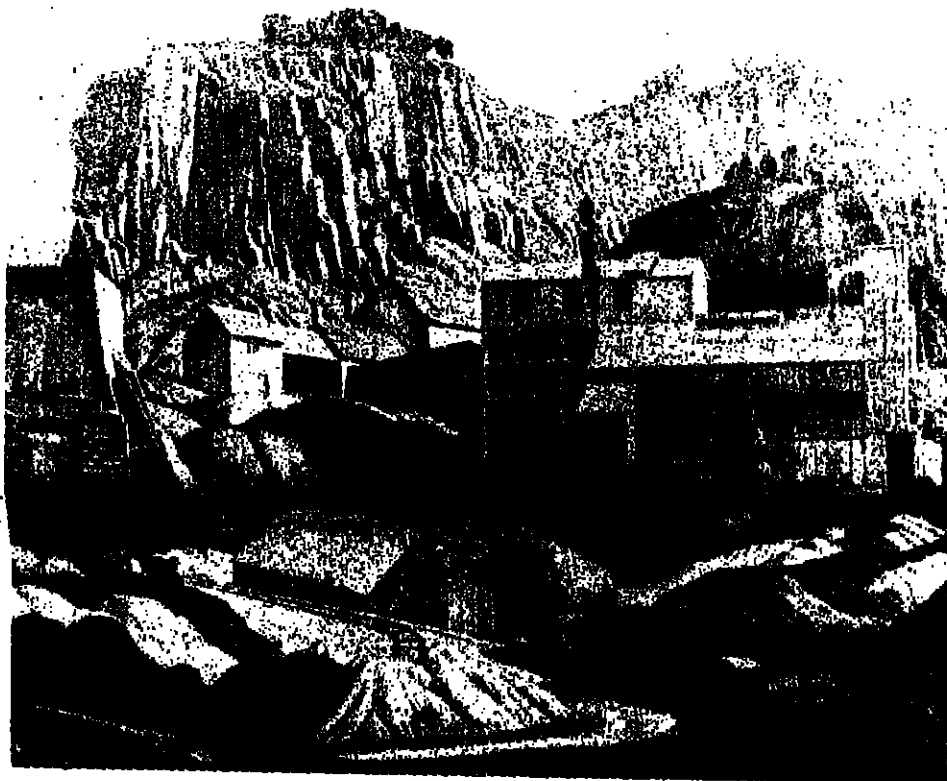
over events which took place so long ago". He is in no doubt, however, that the "circus" was influential in switching Keynes's mind away from changes in the price level to changes in the level of output, as evidenced by his Harris Lectures in Chicago in June 1931, and his later book *The Means to Prosperity*.

The *General Theory* was started in mid-1932, after the "circus" had disbanded in May 1931, but there was voluminous correspondence over drafts with Robertson, Hawtrey and Harrod in particular. Kahn characterizes his own part in the making of the *General Theory* as "conversational", as relieving the solitude (at Tilton) and providing a more rapid means of discussion than correspondence by post. He describes Schumpeter's suggestion that his "share in the historic achievement cannot have fallen very far short of co-authorship" as absurd, and inspired by unconscious hostility to Keynes based on jealousy. Luigi Pasinetti in discussion notes a contradiction between this self-deprecation and what is generally known in Cambridge of Kahn's contribution. I remember Austin Robinson's moving tribute to Keynes at the Centenary Dinner in King's College (July 1983), during which he turned to Kahn in praise and admiration for his collaboration. Kahn avoids the question of

whether the *General Theory* would ever have been written without the remarkable group of young economists who surrounded Keynes between 1930 and 1936.

There is now a consensus that the key innovation of the *General Theory* was the concept of effective demand and the consumption function (the functional dependence of consumption on income) as a necessary condition for undermining Say's Law that supply creates its own demand. I am still ignorant about who "invented" the consumption function. Kahn is justly famous for his 1931 paper on the multiplier (showing that total employment rises by more than any increase in primary employment), but it contains no personal savings function. New investment is matched by saving on the dole; a reduction in foreign lending; increased profits, and perhaps increased saving from a rise in interest rates. But Kahn argues that if there were no saving on the dole, no unspent profits and no trade, the multiplier would be infinite. It seems as if the Danish economist, Warming, may have invented the consumption function: in the *Economic Journal*, of June 1932, he showed that extra saving out of increased real income is the real source of investment, and that the leakage into personal savings ensures the multiplier is not infinite. Kahn in reply denied having assumed that people have a zero marginal propensity to save, and referred (inappropriately) to saving on the dole and unspent profits. The problem with Kahn's article lay in the fact that it was written in the language of Keynes's *Treatise*, where changes in prices and profits equilibrate savings and investment not real income explicitly. Keynes's use of the multiplier in the *General Theory* is much closer to Warming than to Kahn, though he makes no acknowledgement.

Kahn leaves the reader with a picture of immense intellectual excitement during the George Shackle has aptly called the "years of high theory". Cambridge economics was seeing the truth about how aggregate economic function, and so far as Kahn is concerned, succeeded. It is the whole, the vision, that is important, not the individual parts. For his the neoclassical, equilibrium synthesis is a lie, and Harrod was wrong in persuading Keynes to be more polite in discussing the classical economists, and particularly classical interest-rate theory. The *General Theory* has not been superseded as a coherent statement of the theory of the demand for and supply of output as a whole, and Kahn must feel proud not only to have been instrumental in formulating its structure, but also to have lived to tell the story himself. We are all in his debt.



Walter Bell's "Derbyshire Quarry", reproduced from *The British Landscape* by Ian Jeffrey (112pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.95. 0 500 23398 5).

## On the up curve

T. W. Hutchison

**WALTER ELLIS**  
*The Classical Theory of Economic Growth*  
 372pp. Macmillan. £20 (paperback, £8.95).  
 0333 15993 4

This book is concerned with the theories of economic growth (and related theories) of Quesnay, Smith, Malthus, Ricardo and Marx. Four of the nine chapters have appeared before. Revised and supplemented, with a concluding chapter on "The Classical Theory of Economic Growth", these studies, in terms both of analysis and scholarship, make up an extremely impressive volume. The account of Quesnay is especially illuminating and draws on new, or little-known, material.

But, as he is not unaware, Walter Ellis's enterprise is heavily fraught with methodological problems. In the first place, though Smith and Malthus devoted parts of their work to the subject of "progress", hardly any of Mr Ellis's five authors was much concerned with setting out explicitly a formal "theory of economic growth", as such. So what he is engaged in is not simply summarizing and commenting on what his authors wrote about economic growth, but in constructing "the theory of economic growth" which he maintains they implicitly held. (The difference between "summarizing" and "constructing" might be argued to be one of degree, but it is surely here one of

considerable degree.)

Moreover, Ellis seems to regard it as necessary to assume that each economist must be treated as having held to a single consistent theory; in some cases—eg, that of Malthus—throughout a very long career. What is presented, therefore, resembles a series of super-consistent constructions. For, just as the postulate of inhumanly perfect knowledge sustains so much of traditional classical and neo-classical theorizing, so the postulate of the perfect consistency of classical economists seems to underlie Ellis's account of the classical theory of economic growth.

However, as he observes: "The great economists did not always write with the clarity and rigour of modern economists." Their assumptions were not always fully and precisely stated. Thus, "Quesnay-like, Smith-like, Malthus-like, Ricardo-like and Marx-like theories can be constructed: *ad hoc* in the sense, of course, they so often have been and are being." "How?" Ellis then very appositely enquires, "can there be any confidence that modern restatements amount to the theory which actually underlies the thought of the economists in question?" His answer to the problem he has constructed is that the assumptions and conclusions derived "must be precisely those of these authors". But what if the assumptions and conclusions of Malthus over his long career, or Ricardo over his extremely short career, differ, as they do, very significantly in different parts or editions of their writings?

For, as is rather blandly remarked in a footnote:

There has been very considerable controversy in the secondary literature because Ricardo sometimes very closely states his arguments in terms of the simple conclusions that follow where the wage is at the natural rate and all prices are long-period equilibrium ones, while at other times he shows such sophisticated awareness of the full complexities that follow from a more general analysis that a case can be made that this represents his true model.

What is here being admitted is that highly accomplished and conscientious scholars, after years of expert study, can and do, each with much justification, come up with widely and profoundly contradictory interpretations of Ricardo's "true model", or of what he "really meant"; and that interpretations of his assumptions and conclusions—quite apart from the various Marxian versions—differ as chalk from cheese, and justify, on the one hand, the bleakest pessimism, and, on the other, a rosy optimism. For Ricardo, in his quite exceptional short career as an economist, never seems finally to have made up his mind. Hence the vast and variegated Ricardo industry, which is so concerned to make up his mind for him in one contradictory direction or another.

Further methodological problems arise as to what a theory of economic growth is supposed to do or convey. The kind of "growth" models fashionable in the 1960s were mainly concerned with the construction and manipulation of highly simplified, aggregative formulae, often of very tenuous empirical content or

practical applicability. On the other hand, it might well be held that a "theory of economic growth" should be concerned with the real forces, historical, institutional, social, and often non-economic, which make for high or low growth-rates. Ellis explains how this fundamental distinction was insisted upon by his colleague, R. M. Hartwell, who criticized Ellis's original account of Adam Smith's "theory of economic growth" as being confined to "Smith peculiarly as an economist, by focusing attention on technical connections such as those between investment, laws of returns, and the rate of growth", while "Smith's deep concern with the nature of social institutions" had been ignored. In his revision, Mr Ellis has sought to counter this criticism, but uncertainty remains as to the content, supplied or expected, of a "theory of economic growth". In this connection, it might have been interesting if a study of Sir James Stuart had been included. For Stuart was concerned to explain and emphasize the real, historical, institutional and social factors, and so may be regarded as a forerunner of the treatment of, and emphasis on, growth as the outcome of much wider than narrowly economic factors, by the German Historical School (so critical of the English classical).

There is, however, much to be learned from this volume that is analytically illuminating about these five leading classical, or neo-classical, economists, provided that its limitations to history is recognized.

## Oil and troubled lands

Martin Lynn

**TIMOTHY M. SHAW AND OLAJIDE ALUKO**  
*Nigerian Foreign Policy: Alternative perceptions and projections*  
 257pp. Macmillan. £25.  
 0333 32856 6

One of the central developments in international affairs in recent years has been the emergence of so-called "middle powers" such as Brazil and India, to occupy a position somewhere between the states of the global "core" and the developing nations of the global "periphery". As the world's seventh largest oil producer, with the largest population and GNP in Black Africa, and the second largest army, Nigeria is often quoted as one such power. Its role in the MPLA triumph in Angola in 1975-6, its impact on the Zimbabwe negotiations of 1979-80 and its threats to use its massive oil and military reserves against South Africa have led to its being seen as the leading power of Black Africa and to ill-considered but understandable talk of a "Pax Nigeriana" emerging on the continent in the future.

Yet Nigeria remains, for all its oil, a relatively poor country, heavily dependent on the West. How far in practice, therefore, can such a newly emerging power exercise a truly effective and independent foreign policy? One view, perhaps best described as the traditional and optimistic view, stresses the growing influence of such states as Nigeria; another, best described as radical and pessimistic, and increasingly popular among Nigerian political scientists, stresses instead the continuing dependence of the country on the West. It is this debate that is the focus of the collection of

essays in Timothy Shaw and Olajide Aluko's *Nigerian Foreign Policy*. The answer, they feel, requires an examination not just of foreign policy options, but also of Nigeria's internal development strategy and her political economy. The result is a stimulating and wide-ranging book, that is very effectively held together by the editors and that comes down strongly on the side of the radical pessimists.

As a number of contributors point out, Nigerian foreign policy during the 1960s was essentially conservative and low-key, ostensibly non-aligned though in practice sympathetic to the West. It was the oil price rise of the early 1970s, coinciding with the end of the Biafran War, that marked the emergence of Nigeria as an important power. Thereafter Nigeria began to exercise a more active foreign policy, extending its influence beyond its borders, asserting itself within Africa and encouraging African unity against outside intervention. On a regional level, Nigeria began to flex its muscles, threatening to invade the Cameroons on one occasion and despatching a peace-keeping force to Chad on another. Economic and other sanctions began to be used against countries such as Ghana and Liberia, while Nigerian influence lay behind the establishment of the West African economic union, ECOWAS. On a continental level, Nigerian policy was decisive in developing a united African position at the Lomé negotiations with the BEC and in initiating the move towards an African Common Market, begun at the Lagos Conference of 1980. Similarly, Nigeria began to play a larger role in the Organization of African Unity, trying actively for instance (although unsuccessfully) to achieve a settlement in the Western Sahara.

This new assertiveness by Nigeria in Africa affected Western interests. The 1975 decision of the Mohammed government, against strong US pressure, to support the Marxist MPLA in Angola, a decision soon followed by the rest of Black Africa, was probably the watershed in the reorientation of Nigerian foreign policy. This success led Nigeria to use its economic power in 1979, nationalizing BP's assets on the eve of the Commonwealth Conference in order to try to influence British policy towards the Muzorewa-Smith régime in Zimbabwe. As Daniel Bach points out in a perceptive chapter on Nigerian-American relations, this assertiveness, coinciding with the eruption of a number of African crises and Cuban/Soviet interventions, had the effect of prompting the Carter administration to a rapprochement with Nigeria and an attempt to use her as a stabilizing mediator in Africa.

Yet, despite this American recognition of Nigeria's status, how significant is all this? It is arguable, feels Stephen Wright in the most effective chapter of the collection, that Nigeria's policy has achieved little that would not have occurred anyway. In any case, as a number of essays point out, many constraints on Nigeria's foreign policy still exist. As Sola Ojo argues, Nigeria's foreign affairs bureaucracy is in urgent need of overhaul, while as the Chad imbroglio and Libya's success there shows, there is a limit to the effectiveness of the Nigerian army. More significant is Nigeria's continuing economic dependence on the West. The oil weapon, as the 1980s glut proves, is double-edged, and indeed Nigeria's dependence on oil has coincided with a decline in agricultural production and with a growing reliance on food imports from the US. Similarly, attempts to limit Western economic influence

through the policy of indigenizing control of companies operating in Nigeria have come to little. Thomas Biersteker's essay showing the range of strategies used by transnational corporations to evade this. Some contributors would go further. The argument of Sonni Tyoden, among others, is the familiar one that the real constraint on Nigeria's independence today lies in the overt willingness of the Nigerian élite to tie Nigeria to the West through loans and trade. Nigeria, to Tyoden, remains under the control of "a partnership between foreign and local capital", with the increasing economic growth of Nigeria merely leading to increasing dependence on the West. According to this view, oil has simply led to Nigeria's increased incorporation into the global, and thus Western-controlled, economy.

Yet, true or not—and one's acceptance of this view depends less on facts than on one's political stance—this is not particularly relevant in practice. In effect, there is little difference between the two views. Neither side, radical nor traditional, would deny that Nigeria in 1984 is a good deal more independent than in 1964. If the longer-term perspective is taken, then both sides would agree that Nigeria, for all the limitations rightly stressed by the radical view, is clearly moving towards becoming a major continental power. Oil, while a weapon of fluctuating effectiveness, is still a weapon, and, as even Marxists like Bill Warren have pointed out, the Nigerian élite, for all its reliance on Western companies, is a good deal more independent than is credited. Neither side would dispute Andrew Young's judgment, quoted by Shaw, that "Nigeria is in... important respects, Africa's most powerful nation".

## Sand and sovereignty

Francis Ghiles

**TONY HODGES**  
*Western Sahara: The roots of a desert war*  
 388pp. Croom Helm. £16.95.  
 07099 1295 1

**MAGALI MORSEY**  
*North Africa 1800-1900*  
 340pp. Longman. £18.95 (paperback, £6.95).  
 0582 78376 3

**RICHARD LAWLESS AND ALLAN FINDLAY**  
 (Editors)

*North Africa*  
 304pp. Croom Helm. £16.95.

**VENTURE DE PARADIS**  
*Tunis et Alger au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*  
 287pp. Paris: Sindbad. 120fr.

Like Hamlet's "little patch of ground that hath in it no profit but the name", the Western Sahara is the theatre of a war which will, this autumn, enter its ninth year. It is not a war which has caught the Western imagination: it is seldom reported in the press, and few left-wing groups have made much fuss about the plight of the Saharawi people. Indeed, not many people have any real idea where the area lies on the map.

The Western Sahara is a victim of its sheer remoteness: it is far removed from any major centre of population and its inhabitants number no more than 300,000. The war has claimed no white victims and has not become the focus of any serious East-West rivalry. The West has lent broad support to King Hassan of Morocco, who claimed the territory as his own after the Spaniards evacuated their colony in the winter of 1975-6, fearing that a lost war could cost him this throne, but it has avoided offending Algeria, which remains the major backer of the "Saharawi Democratic Republic". The United States, for whom Hassan has been a useful proxy in Zaïre, Egypt and Israel, and France have done their utmost to help Hassan, but the Soviet Union has failed to come out in favour of the Front Polisario guerrillas. Both the UN and the Organization of African Unity have called on Hassan to allow a referendum to settle the war, but the king has, so far, successfully avoided putting the issue to the vote. Were he to do so, little would come of such an exercise as the majority of the inhabitants lived in the face of the Moroccan invasion eight and

a half years ago.

As so often with regional conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, the root causes of this conflict are complex. Despite the interest succeeding Moroccan sovereigns have shown in the riches which lay beyond the Sahara (gold, gum, slaves) they have seldom been in a position to exercise any real control over the lands beyond the towns of Goulmine and Zagora.

This point is brought out very clearly in the first serious study of the conflict to be published in English, *Western Sahara: The roots of a desert war*, which quotes a letter written in 1768 by Sultan Moulay Abdallah to King Carlos the Third of Spain, who was seeking to convince the Sultan to incorporate a clause on fishing into a treaty signed between the two countries a year previously. "His Imperial Majesty", wrote the Sultan, "warns the inhabitants of the Canaries against any fishing expedition to the coast of Oued Noun and beyond. He disclaims any responsibility for the way they may be treated by the Arabs of the country to whom it is difficult to apply decisions since they have no fixed residence, travel as they wish and pitch their tents where they choose."

Even at the end of last century, when the Spaniards claimed the territory and set up one or two minuscule settlements on the coast at El Alun and Dahkla, the situation remained essentially unchanged. It was only after a major Franco-Spanish military operation in 1958, known as Operation Ecouvillon, that the tribes were brought to heel. By then, people of the Western Sahara had been involved in fighting for the liberation of Southern Morocco from French rule and Sultan Mohammed the Fifth was only too happy to see them disarmed. Like the guerrillas who had fought farther to the north, in the Rif mountains, during the legendary Abd' El Krim rising in the 1920s, they constituted a serious potential threat to his power.

It is hardly surprising, given these circumstances, that the International Court of Justice, when called upon by Hassan to give an opinion, in 1974 rejected Morocco and Mauritania's claims to historic sovereignty. The court concluded its report by saying that "the majority of the population within the Spanish Sahara was manifestly in favour of independence". A United Nations mission had reached the same conclusion after visiting the territory. King

Hassan drew from these statements the perverse conclusion that the opinion of the Court could only mean one thing, that "the Western Sahara was a part of Moroccan territory over which sovereignty was exercised by the King of Morocco. Today, Moroccan demands have been recognised by the legal advisory organ of the United Nations."

Since 1975, the Western Sahara has been the scene of a fierce war waged by guerrillas vastly inferior in number to the 100,000-strong occupying Moroccan army; of more than 100,000 refugees surviving in camps on Algerian soil; and of a country—Morocco—being slowly ruined economically by war. Yet Morocco has succeeded in holding on to part of the contested territory, containing rich phosphate deposits, behind a defensive wall. The guerrillas cannot hope to defeat a country of twenty-two million people but neither are there any signs that their resolve is wavering. Their refugee-camps are well organized and, for the visitor, there is no mistaking the forging of a modern form of Saharawi national consciousness.

The Saharawis have their pantheon of heroes, from Mohammed Sidi Ibrahim Bassiri, leader of the early resistance movement, who disappeared after his arrest by the Spanish authorities in 1970; to El Ouali Mustapha Sayed, first Secretary-General of the Front Polisario, killed during a daring raid on Nouakchott in June 1976. For Hassan, the early success which followed the "peaceful march" by hundreds of thousands of his subjects into the Western Sahara, when all Morocco's political parties rallied round the throne, has turned sour. He is diplomatically isolated but cannot afford to go back on the policy he initiated in 1975. Algeria, meanwhile, which has helped the Saharawi Republic to gain recognition from more than fifty states and has granted much aid to them in the form of weapons and food, awaits the outcome of a conflict which costs it little, while it ruins its neighbour.

These events are well documented in the book by Tony Hodges, who traces the war's origins back a thousand years in North African history and has given us a crisply written account. In her *North Africa 1800-1900*, Magali Morsey perhaps exaggerates the underlying unity of the Muslim world in that period. Some leading personalities certainly travelled widely and the gradual conquest of these coun-

tries by European powers increased Muslim self-awareness in the face of growing Christian domination. None the less the isolation of one group from another, often within the same country, was, throughout the period, a source of considerable weakness in all the countries concerned, with the exception maybe of Egypt and Tunisia. Dr Morsey has provided a thorough picture of the six countries—including the three Maghrib countries, Libya, Egypt and Sudan—which were overrun in the nineteenth century, and it is refreshing to find the viewpoint of many North African actors themselves being given prominence.

Richard Lawless and Allan Findlay's *North Africa* contains one very perceptive chapter on Algerian politics by Hugh Roberts, but otherwise no information that has not been published before. The articles devoted to Morocco are solid but unexceptional but the two on Tunisia contain many mistakes. Tunisia, we learn, is ruled by a "neo-colonial clique" and there are rumours of the old naval base at Bizerta being reopened for use by the American Sixth Fleet! Such assertions may have a place in polemical newspaper articles, not in a serious book.

To conclude on a more cheerful note, Sindbad Editions in Paris have done a remarkable job over the past few years in republishing old texts relating to the Middle East, and now they have brought out the memoirs of Venture de Paradis, who acted as interpreter to Napoleon in Egypt and in various capacities in the French consulates of the Levant and North Africa at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. *Tunis et Alger au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* gives us portraits of rulers, of local customs and of the joys and miseries of European traders and diplomats. The book was much used a few years after it first appeared when the French were making their plans to invade Algeria. Today it still makes an excellent travelling companion to the Maghrib.

*ECOWAS and the Economic Integration of West Africa* (210pp. C. Hurst & Co. £13.50. 0 905838 76 9), by the Nigerian economist Uka Ezenwe, is concerned to show how intra-regional trade can be "greatly developed by the exploitation of existing resources and the restructuring of the existing infrastructure". An epilogue deals with ECOWAS policy on population movement.

Handwritten note: *Journal 13/16*



# Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

It took three years for the governments of the day to find a new Poet Laureate after the death of Tennyson — but the bookmakers William Hill think that Sir John Betjeman's successor will be found more promptly. So convinced are they that the name will be announced soon that they closed the betting on the appointment two weeks ago. When I rang 10 Downing Street I was assured that this column would not be overtaken by events — but William Hill's sources are bound to be better than mine.

"For guidance", Downing Street pointed out that when Betjeman's predecessor C. Day-Lewis died at a similar time of year, the new appointment was not announced until the autumn. This gives plenty of time for consultations to take place, first between Downing Street and appropriate authorities in the field, and then between Downing Street and Buckingham Palace.

The council of the Poetry Society, as one such authority, has responded diplomatically with a number of names, rather than a single candidate. (At least one runner, Gavin Ewart, is on the council.) But it has also made a positive recommendation: that the Laureateship should no longer be an appointment for life. Instead, the council suggests it should last for no more than five years.

The idea for a limited licence for laureates came from the Poetry Society's former chairman, Clifford Simmons. He told me "the laureateship has had a terrible past, and if it's to be an honour worth having it's time we looked at it again. What we need is someone who will promote poetry. If the job became onerous — and it should do — then a fixed term would be quite enough."

The imposition of even greater public responsibility might make things difficult for the most tipped candidate, Philip Larkin, whose poetry is so private he has only published four poems in the last ten years. It would also merit a salary of more than £97 a year. When William Hill closed their book the odds were Larkin 5-4

on, D.J. Enright 5-1, Ted Hughes 7-1, Stephen Spender 8-1, Roy Fuller 12-1, Gavin Ewart 14-1, Robert Graves 25-1.

Traditionally there has been more to the relationship of author and publisher than the sum of their royalty agreement, but the cruelties of commerce have increasingly undermined it: publishers can no longer afford to support an author's temporary unpopularity, and remaindering has become ruthless; authors no longer stay with a single publisher, but are encouraged by their agents to shop around for the best deal. Now an attempt has come from an unexpected quarter to restore the traditional, one could almost say paternalist, relationship.

Alienated by the harsh commercial attitudes of the large, corporatized publishing houses, but dissatisfied with the promotion and distribution available from smaller independent imprints, four writers with radical reputations, John Berger, Peter Fuller, Tom Nairn and Anthony Barnett came together last December to form a partnership, "Tigerstripe". Collectively they sought out a publisher who could properly exploit their current work, but who would also guarantee long-term support and, it is hoped, keep their work in print. As Anthony Barnett told me, "we were not looking for so-called gentlemanly publishing, but we were trying to re-establish the classical relationship between an author and a single publishing house."

The Tigerstripe authors, who have since been joined by Charles Rycroft and David Widgery, put themselves up to auction through the agent Anthony Shiel; after discussions with a number of leading publishing houses, they have now signed an agreement with Chatto and Windus, the parent house of Virago and the Hogarth Press. Tigerstripe becomes a new Chatto list. John Berger's *G* (previously pulped by Penguin) will be published in paperback next May, and Chatto are taking over publication of his *Pig Earth* trilogy from the Writers and Readers Cooperative. Other titles

to come are Peter Fuller's *Images of God*, Nairn's *The Glamour of Backwardness* on royalty, and a book by Barnett on Vietnam. As more authors join the Tigerstripe partnership the list will be extended to cover fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

The price to be paid is surrender of the authors' freedom to publish in future with anyone but Chatto, but reciprocally, should Chatto prove unsatisfactory or change its character because of a takeover, Tigerstripe may leave as a group, and take all their books with them. Carmen Callil, Managing Director of Chatto, drives a hard bargain (and is still not obliged to keep Tigerstripe books in print) but both sides agree that they have found a new way to define the author-publisher relationship. Chatto now know that it is worth developing the Tigerstripe list; the authors have a legal partnership that protects them while maintaining individual creative freedom. As any author or publisher will admit, the most important part of their dealings cannot be expressed on paper; it is the mutual confidence that counts. As Anthony Barnett put it: "We wrote all those clauses about leaving in order to be able to stay."

When it was announced that Marghanita Laski is to step down after what has been a bruising time as chairman of the Arts Council's literature panel, she commented that the panel's responsibility to take "literature to people who haven't learned how rich it is" is now firmly in the hands of the Regional Arts Associations. But unless there is an unexpected change of heart at the Arts Council's meeting next week, the RAAs will find themselves with much of the responsibility, but little money to carry it out.

Under the Council's new policy the budget for literature will be more than halved to £450,000 and its schemes for writers' tours, writers' fellowships and assisting bookshops will be devolved to the regional associations. The Arvon Foundation will also lose direct support, but its money is guaranteed for three

years. Not so the rest. In spite of the distinct impression to the contrary given by the Council's policy documents and press releases, £130,000 worth of literary schemes will be handed over to the regions without any money to support them.

The Regional Arts Associations are deeply alarmed at the prospect of the underfunding of literature being exported to the hard-pressed regions. Absurdly, the £100,000 of the Regional Initiatives Fund established by the Literature department this year will be passed over to the regions, but this is specifically for new work, not existing schemes. Even if it were so applied, it is still £30,000 short of the money needed to keep them going. It is still undecided how the Fund will be divided between the RAAs.

In the meantime Marghanita Laski has been succeeded on the literature panel by her vice-chairman, Dr Robert Woolf. Dr Woolf retains his vice-chairmanship of the drama panel, but that the literature department has so little to do, its absorption by the drama department seems an administrative inevitability.

The true sign of a cult figure is to be discounted not once, but twice. This seems to be the case with William Burroughs, whose writings on drugs and experiments with found texts and collage composition (themselves a redoubt of Dada) were an important influence on the underground literature of the 1960s. In the 1970s Burroughs' reputation faded, but his work is now influencing a whole new generation.

Significantly, he is being rediscovered through a new medium, video, and it is in sound and visual experiments that appeal in particular the experimental films he made around 1960 with the artist Brion Gyson. He invented the cut-up technique and the film-maker Antony Balch. No underground happening of the 1960s was complete without showing of their film *Towers Open Fire*.

Much of this early film material has been released on video-tape by Ikon, a group of independent video-makers who deem themselves as "more left field than the average", and whose profits are derived from releasing videos of such experimental music groups as Cabaret Voltaire (Dada again), The Fall, and Psychic Television, who have given sound and video performances to rapt audiences without appearing on stage at all.

The archive material, which is of great value, survived extinction in a way that would place the aleatory predilections of its makers. Antony Balch, who devoted most of his life to the unrealized film version of Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* died of stomach cancer in 1980. All his films and drawings were about to be thrown into a skip when an *officelondo*, the performance artist Genesis P. Orridge, rescued the material, and subsequently acquired the rights. Orridge — of Psychic Television — has produced a cut-up of the early Burroughs Balch film cut-ups, including material seen before. The original black-and-white footage — with a complete *Towers Open Fire* — has been subtly tinted, and released on a video-tape of a reading by Burroughs and the poet John Giorno at the Hacienda night-club in Manchester in 1982.

The curiosity is that video and tape have made perfectable the clumsy experimental work of the pioneers. The artists were ahead of the technology, while the cut-up multi-media world they projected has become everyday life for a generation reared on television. If you wish to test this theory, or merely experience *déjà-vu*, the tapes, titled *The Final Academy Documents*, can be seen as part of an *idea* festival at the Riverside Studios on August 16, and are available from Ikon PCL, 86 Pall Mall Road, West Didsbury, Manchester 20, at £25 plus £2.50 p&p (Europe £4; overseas £8).

Entries are invited before November 1 for the National Poetry Competition 1984, with prizes ranging from £2,000 to £50. The judges will be James Berry, George MacBeth and Hugo Williams. Entry forms may be had from the Poetry Society, National Poetry Competition, 21 Earl's Court Square, London SW5 8RF (send see).

# Letters

## Editing Yeats

Sir, — May I add some footnotes to Warwick Gould's exasperated review of Richard J. Finneran's new edition of Yeats's poems (June 29)?

I agree that the edition is irritating, especially in the glare of its claim to present "all the poems intended for publication by Yeats in the authorized arrangement and with accurate texts", but I wish Gould had indicated that the problems it gives the reader are of different kinds:

1) *Mistakes*. There may be more of these than I've noticed or heard of. I can't believe that Finneran intended to drop the title and first two lines of "The Living Beauty"; or to duplicate a line in "The Tower" and cause a domino effect on the division of the later stanzas; or to omit "the" from the first line of "A Bronze Head".

2) *Silent emendations*. These are a nuisance, because it's impossible to distinguish them from mistakes. The second stanza of "Sixteen Dead Men" normally reads:

You say that we should still the land  
Till Germany's overcome;  
But who is there to argue that  
Now Peace is deaf and dumb?  
And is their logic to outweigh  
MacDonagh's bony thumb?

Finneran has changed "their" to "there", without any explanation. He hasn't made nonsense of the line but he has weakened its sense. He has also changed punctuation-marks in many places without offering cause, apart from a general claim that he has fulfilled Yeats's rhetorical intention.

3) *Emendation upon shown cause*. In "A Bronze Head" Finneran has changed "woman" to "woman's" in the second stanza, but at least he has explained the change. The explanation doesn't satisfy Gould, but I think there's a decent argument for it. Similarly Finneran at least makes whatever case can be made for "rewarding" rather than "rewarding" in "The Song of the Happy Shepherd".

4) *Exclusion*. Finneran's decision to print "all poems by W. B. Yeats published in his lifetime" means that he doesn't print "Reprisals" — a far better poem than many he has included. It's in the Variorum edition, but I'm sure readers would like to have it in the new *Poems*.

5) *A matter of policy*. Finneran's decision to take as his copy-text the 1933 rather than — as the Variorum editors did — the 1949 edition has many consequences, but again he has argued the case. If I don't agree with him, at least I know what I'm not agreeing with.

The publisher, Macmillan, should now make available an errata slip, so that readers may tell the difference between an emendation and an error. That would still leave many oddities of punctuation, but it would be a helpful start, and show goodwill.

DENIS DONOGHUE,  
Gaybrook, North Avenue, Mount Merrion, Dublin.

Sir, — In his brief review of A. Norman Jeffares' lengthy glossary, *A New Commentary on the Poems of W. B. Yeats* (June 29), Warwick Gould says that "it won't do" for us to accept the reading of a Yeats poem that Jeffares learnt from Maud Gonne MacBride: "Friends is unmanageably wrong: it won't do to have Lady Gregory unblinking 'Youth's dreamy load' even if Maud Gonne chose to read it in that way." One can hardly expect Jeffares' book to be flawless, but as this is the single example of a defect that Gould cites, it might be as well to point out that it is, on the contrary, quite correct.

In an unpublished letter in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, postmarked January 2, 1911, Yeats sends Lady Gregory a draft of the lines in question and tells her that they are about her; something he did from time to time.

Whether Yeats intended the poem to be read only in this way is of course another question, one that points up the dangers of biographical interpretations of poetry. But for the historical record as it relates to the origin of the poem, there can be no question that the documentary evidence confirms that in this instance Professor Jeffares is right.

MARY FITZGERALD,  
Department of English, University of New Orleans,  
Lake Front, New Orleans, Louisiana 70148.

## Dating 'Othello'

Sir, — Hard facts relating to the chronology of Shakespeare's plays are scarce, so your readers may be interested in one that I came upon recently. Richard Knolles' *History of the Turks*, of 1603, seems first to have been mentioned in connection with *Othello* by Isaac Reed, in 1793. Modern scholarship endorses the view that the reports of numbers and movements of the Turkish galleys in Act One, Scene Three, of the play directly reflect Knolles's account of the Battle of Lepanto. For example, in articles published in *Shakespeare Survey* 21 (1968), Emrys Jones remarks that the naval manoeuvres reported in the play "correspond exactly to Knolles's account of the Turkish invasion plan", and G. R. Hibbard independently states "I find it difficult to believe that Shakespeare had not been reading Knolles at the time he was writing *Othello*." Only Geoffrey Bulloagh appears to consider the implications of Knolles's influence for the play's date of composition: "Details probably taken by Shakespeare from R. Knolles's *History of the Turks* (1603), which was dedicated to James I, place the play between March 1603 and October 1604" (*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare VII*, 1975, p. 194). Bulloagh's *terminus ad quem* is provided by our knowledge that *Othello* was given in the Banqueting House, Whitehall, on November 1, 1604. He no doubt gives March 1603 as the *terminus a quo* because that is the month of James's accession. What appears not to have been noted is that the epistle to Knolles's book is dated "From Sandwiche the last of September, 1603". Clearly, then, if Knolles's influence is accepted, the play cannot have been written before October 1603.

STANLEY WELLS,  
The Oxford Shakespeare, 40 Walton Crescent,  
Oxford.

## 'Sir John Did His Duty'

Sir, — The Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, has favoured me, as well as Don Markwell, with a special mention in his prolix letter (June 22). I must emphasize, however, that in the continuing debate on the merits of Sir Garfield Barwick's book my contribution (*Quadrant*, April 1984) has been misrepresented no less cynically by the Attorney than he has dismissed Markwell's definitive article on Sir John Kerr's dismissal of Gough Whitlam in 1975 (*Quadrant*, March 1984).

First, my *Quadrant* article was an extended commentary on a review article dealing with Barwick's book by George Winterton in that same issue. When Senator Evans claimed that before I had addressed myself to what he regards as "the central issue", I had ranged in my article "over a wide variety of issues", I must stress that, contrary to what the Attorney seemed to be implying, I had not embarked upon some capricious frolic of my own but had commented at length on matters judged by Winterton to be worthy of extended comment.

Second, it is true that I had claimed that, not being a lawyer, I felt less than comfortable with the question as to whether Sir John Kerr's action could be justified in terms of constitutional duty and not simply constitutional authority. But, contrary to Evans's assertion, I did not rely for assistance solely on Markwell's article in *Quadrant*, although it must be said that the question was more fully discussed therein than the Attorney has been prepared to allow. I also went on to quote *in extenso* from a letter to the *Canberra Times*, December 9, 1983, in which Sir Garfield Barwick defended himself and his book against an attack by Senator Evans on the very issue of constitutional duty, among others, in a long article in that paper dated November 11, 1983. To my knowledge the Attorney has not responded to that letter from Barwick.

Some of the sentences in Sir Garfield's letter, which I did not quote in my *Quadrant* article, I now quote for the light they throw on the Attorney's forensic method. Before dealing specifically with two matters raised by Evans — one of them was a sentence dealing with the attitudes of his brother justices to his advising Kerr which the Attorney has repeated with fervor in his *TLS* letter of June 22; the other, the question of legal duty — Sir Garfield

wrote: "It is plain from the tone and content of the statement that Mr Attorney is committed to continuing the 'rage' which Mr Whitlam, in his outburst of 11 November, 1975 counselled the faithful to maintain. But, in rage, emotion overtops reason. Readers of my book will find my answers to the assertions which Mr Attorney reiterates in his statement." And so it is with Mr Attorney's letter of June 22. There is not one topic, not one issue raised by Senator Evans which in substance has not been fully discussed and in my view refuted in the very articles to which the Attorney refers and also in Sir Garfield's *Canberra Times* letter of December 9, 1983. Mr Attorney reiterates them, however, as if they were not only irrefutable but also as if they had never even been addressed by others.

I fear that from a commendable deference to his high office, you have allowed Senator Evans to abuse the hospitality of your columns. What he has written cannot be treated as a considered and judicious statement of the law which one is, I feel, entitled to expect from the Commonwealth of Australia's first Law Officer. All he has displayed in the greater part of three columns is his impulsive playing of the political game without even attempting an honest evaluation of contrary arguments.

J. B. PAUL,  
School of Political Science, University of New South  
Wales, Kensington, New South Wales.

## 'The Ancient Greeks'

Sir, — Paul Cartledge's review (June 29) of John Fine's *The Ancient Greeks* will strike some historians as not only "ungenerous" (as he allowed) but unfair. A medievalist myself, I do try to keep up with the Greeks and Romans, as of course do many other non-specialists, not because I find some special interest in such things as Greek land tenure, family structure, or commercial life, but because classical civilization is indeed classic in our tradition. Since the culture of that civilization, which makes it classic, radiated from its political axis, the received construction of the "history" of Greece and Rome is political — the narrative of political or public action. This construction, developed over the past few centuries and attached to the tradition of ancient historiography, has also become paradigmatic for later periods, to say nothing of its non-Western extensions. It is important for many reasons that the story be incessantly retold even if nothing positively new is added in the retelling — still better of course if the story is enriched by new insights into old sources, newly discovered evidence, and new knowledge gained by posing new questions.

But the enrichments are just that, valuable insofar as they improve the political narrative. I suspect that when Cartledge thinks of "other, better ways of paying the tribute that is due to the living legacy of ancient Greece" he has in mind the sort of social and cultural study that flourishes today among historians of medieval and modern Europe; they at any rate are the ones least likely to raise an eyebrow at a critic who complains that "nothing published later than 1980 seems to have been put to use." But the differences between classical and post-classical history are decisive. The latter is still up for grabs because only a fraction of the evidence is known and used, and because the end is not in sight — neither holds true for the former.

I would suggest that if ancient Greece has left us a "living legacy" it has secured its life by making it the sort of entailed inheritance that Edmund Burke saw as imposing on the heirs a moral and practical obligation not to subvert it by bright ideas whenever these occurred to them. Such a subversion would indeed be operated on Greek history if it were to be depoliticized and made to resemble the modern kind of social history. Meanwhile, since Cartledge's other objections to Fine's book do not seriously question its merit as an avatar of the traditional genre, why not be generous and fair and say it is a good book?

HOWARD KAMINSKY,  
Department of History, Florida International University,  
Miami, Florida 33199.

## European Peace Movements

Sir, — Since John Sandford (Letters, June 22) accuses me of "mischievously snipping" the penultimate paragraph of his book *The Sword and the Ploughshare*, allow me to quote the offending passage more fully: Perhaps the most salutary lesson that the peace movement in the GDR can teach us is that relations between the grass roots and the authorities there show remarkable parallels with the experiences of Western movements; they too are confronted with a militaristic ethos, with arguments about "deterrence", the need to be "strong" and accusations that they, unwittingly or otherwise, are "doing the other side's job for them".

I wrote in my review that Dr Sandford's evidence for this assertion was a police attack on one small demonstration in West Berlin, briefly described in the book's concluding paragraph. Sandford retorts that his evidence lies "in the book as a whole". From the context it must be clear to any intelligent reader that I meant evidence about the "experiences of Western movements", whereas the rest of the book deals (very fairly) with the experiences of peace activists in the GDR. If Sandford has evidence of "a militaristic ethos" in West Germany comparable with the systematic militarization of East German society (which he well describes), let him produce it. Otherwise, those of us who have lived in both West and East Germany are bound to conclude that he is talking nonsense.

He then writes, "There are differences, major differences, of degree between what autonomous initiatives can do in the East and what they can do in the West, but the problem that confronts them is the same." I think these are differences of kind, and the problem that confronts them is therefore different. The fate of Roland Jahn illustrates my point. When a young West German is arrested for riding through Nuremberg with a pennant on his bicycle proclaiming "Solidarity with the French people" (or "Fraternity with the British miners"), sentenced to twenty-two months imprisonment and, after serving six months, expelled against his will to East Germany, then "the problem that confronts" us and them may be, indeed, "the same"; and then Dr Sandford can claim his vindication, in an unpublished letter to the *New Times Literary Supplement*.

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH,  
49 Southfield Road, Oxford.

## The Defence of Western Europe

Sir, — Let me make a belated comment on Charles Mosley's letter concerning the defence of Western Europe (June 8).

While one really cannot know the "innermost plans" of the Soviet leaders, what about the record of their foreign policy after the war? Finland really is an example, "a real-life case". Just how has it suffered from the Bear's presence around the corner? If "Finlandization", which I consider a polite way of giving a big and valuable neighbour its due in matters of self-esteem (for instance, official Finland does not insist that the Soviets change their domestic policy; that is left to individuals) would offend the vanity of greater powers, I should like to know just what is especially formidable in this history.

It's odd to see how scared it is possible to get in the British Isles. The absence of a like atmosphere in Finland can no doubt be traced to the country's successful experience in three wars against the Soviets: a military reserve of 700,000 men possibly also makes some difference. The main explanation, however, seems to be that a totalitarian country can be a quite decent and viable neighbour. One can but shudder at the thought of the Russian masses let loose to influence politics after the American fashion.

Bold as it is to assert the glory of nuclear race, one would do well to look at the consequences in the Soviet Union. A great patriotic cold war is let loose. And for what? One cannot defend anybody with rockets; only military training, rifles and a will to live free count. TIMO VIHAVAINEN,  
University of Helsinki, Institute for Historical Research and Documentation, Helsinki.

## Samuel Johnson 1709-84

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## AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

- Gillian Avery's novel *Onlookers* was published last year.
- Michael Banton's most recent book is *Racial and Ethnic Competition*, 1983.
- Penny Boumeita's *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and narrative form* was published in 1982.
- Julia Briggs's *This Stage-Play World: English literature and its background 1580-1625* was published last year.
- Rory Coonan's exhibition of photographs, *St Helena*, was on show at the Commonwealth Institute in May.
- Basil Cotter is a Reader in English at the University of Bristol.
- Robert Donington's books include *The Rise of Opera*, 1982.
- David Fitzpatrick is the author of *Politics and Irish Life*, 1977.
- Roger Garfit's most recent collection of poems, *The Broken Road*, was published in 1982.
- Victoria Glendinning's biography *Vita: The Life of V. Sackville-West* was published last year.
- Maria Morris Hambourg is co-author of *The Work of Aigai*. Volume III was published earlier this year.
- Roy Harris is Professor of General Linguistics at the University of Oxford.
- Erle Homburger is the author of *The Art of the Real: Poetry since 1939*, 1977.
- Hans Krunk is the author of *Hygiene*, 1975.
- Clare Le Corbellier is Associate Curator in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Dominic Liven is a lecturer in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics.
- Martin Lynn is a lecturer in Modern History at Queen's University, Belfast.
- Anthony North is a Research Assistant in the Metalwork Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- Leon O'Brien's most recent book is *Revolutionary Underground: The story of the Irish Republican Brotherhood 1858-1924*, 1976.
- David Papineau is the author of *Theory and Meaning*, 1980.
- Richard Pipes is Professor of History at Harvard University.
- Sidney Pollard is Professor of Economic History at the University of Bielefeld, West Germany.
- S. S. Praver's Bithell memorial lecture, *Coalminers and Englishmen: A study of verbal caricature*, has recently been published.
- Jason Rutherford is the Keeper of Applied Arts at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton.
- Lorna Sage is a lecturer in English and American studies at the University of East Anglia.
- S. Schepman's most recent book is *William Shakespeare: Records and images*, 1981.
- Anne Stevenson is Northern Arts Fellow in Writing at the Universities of Newcastle and Durham.
- Anthony Storr's most recent book is *Jung: Selected writings*, 1983.
- A. P. Thirlwall is Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Kent at Canterbury.
- J. R. Vincent is Professor of Modern History at the University of Bristol.
- Chris Wallace-Crabbe's most recent collection of poems, *The Emotions Are Not Skilled Workers*, was published in 1980.
- Eugen Weber is Professor of Modern European History at the University of California, Los Angeles.
- Paul Weindling is the co-editor of *Information Sources in the History of Science and Medicine*, which was published last year.
- Nigel Wheale's collection of poetry *Strong Lines, Recessional Numbers* appeared in 1981.
- J. J. White is a Reader in German at King's College, London.
- Guy M. Wilson is the author, with A. U. B. Norman, of *Treasures from the Tower of London*, an exhibition of Arms and Armour, 1982.



# COMMENTARY

## Posing for posterity

Lucy Ellmann

The Hard-Won Image: Traditional method and subject in recent British art  
Tate Gallery, until September 9

The main interest of the exhibition, *The Hard-Won Image*, lies in discovering what it is about. One turns to the seven-chapter catalogue (80pp. Tate Gallery, £3.50, 0 946590 095) with some anticipation of an answer but Richard Morphet, the curator of the Tate responsible for selecting the show, defines his purpose in the manner of a sphinx. He begins by a process of negation: the "Hard-Won Image" is not abstract art, not work which makes use of texts, photographs or found objects, not in general work which does not belong to the Tate, and not work done more than twenty years ago or by artists now deceased (with the commendable exception of nine of Adrian Stokes's last still lifes). It is not done by the Honourable Gentlemen of the avant-garde certainly, who were given enough of an airing in Morphet's opinion by last year's *New Art at the Tate Gallery*. It is instead the work of artists who he fears might otherwise be lost in the wake of all the attention given to artists who ally themselves to isms:

The revision that is desirable does not involve demolition of the currently accepted giants but significant expansion of the pantheon, and the recognition that

the "mainstream" does not follow the pattern of a railway line but rather that of a wide-flowing river fed by many tributaries and composed of interweaving currents.

This hard-won art-historical imagery still leaves the nature of Morphet's tributaries as obscure as the source of the Nile once was.

But he eventually establishes some common ground between them. Although he denies any prejudice against "dashed-off" art, his choices and his title have centred on work which took a long time to produce. The image is hard-won not from the clutches of the abstractionists who want to destroy it but simply through great expenditure of time. "In order that a work should be truly new, it must be thoroughly wrought", he writes. Only then can the subject and means merge in a decisive and convincing form. Yet this is perhaps not quite such a dependable formula, as too much time seems in some cases to have led these works to become over-wrought. Apart from his picture of a swimming-pool and another of a scene in Dalston Junction, Leon Kossoff's works lose spirit and sag under the weight of paint and the signs of the artist's exertions. Raymond Mason's nine-foot-wide sculpture of grape-harvesting is similarly effortful, and awkward, in its transubstantiation of a vineyard into epoxy resin and acrylic paint.

William Coldstream's irritating technique of painting people through an imaginary grid

attracts Morphet, for it must take time. The logic and objectivity of the system lead to an untouched quality, as if the artist has hardly been present, which, though impersonal as a means of portraiture, evokes an immediacy for the viewer when encountering Coldstream's nudes. Euan Uglow uses the same method to paint a more contrived and colourful picture of a woman who perhaps found the bath too hot and has jumped out on to pinkened legs. Her surprising calm at such a moment is a feature of much of the art in the exhibition, poised as it is. Morphet assures us, firmly on the rock of tradition. Craigie Aitchison's "Wall and Fields at Tulliallan" has a stillness born of its prairie-like expanse of green land and a cloudless blue sky, an emptiness probed only by three sheep, four dead trees and a telegraph pole.

These artists, Morphet claims, "make magic out of normality", but dangers lurk in such wizardry. There is something much too heretofore, arrested-for-poaching-tomorrow about Stephen McKenna's "Venus and Adonis". The lovers sprawl somewhere in the suburban Green Belt, yapped at by beagles and burdened with a Vidal Sassooned Cupid. One can imagine Venus planting anemones perhaps, but not tearing her hair. McKenna's large narrative landscapes are more cunningly romanticized and because of their size peculiarly inviting. But Patrick George's landscape-painting is less forced and its lushness more believable. Two recent paintings by Michael Andrews, in particular "Melanie and Me Swimming" — in which a man holds up a little girl, both figures suspended in a blackness which merges water with sky — convey an enviably sensuous approach to the everyday world.

Colour in British art is traditionally disappointing and, despite an occasional over-compensatory drift into garishness, there is the usual preponderance of grey here. Yet Robert Medley's moving self-portrait via Watteau,

"Gilles au Nu", and the still lifes of Stokes and Rodrigo Moynihan attest to the value of aesthetically pallid colour schemes. Colin Self's coloured Sci-Fi-style drawings of gardens lay to behind the atmospheric abilities of his monochromatic charcoal studies done over his life. Helped by titles like "Whittingham Road Crossing at midnight (towards Norwich)", snow on the line, 25 January", his night-time railway scenes and one of a church immersed in a spectator in the artist's solitary experience, while saving us from his discomfort.

But the bright Los Angeles colours of Hockney's portraits and of Peter Blake's portrait of Hockney himself are seductive. Lawrence Gowing, who owes allegiance both to the grey painters of London and to Cézanne, abandons the former in his painting, "Trappee", a Cézannian opposition of red and green built up into the exciting image of a naked man swinging strongly and swiftly through space.

Morphet looks much towards posterity in its supposedly conclusive and fair judgment on art. He prophesies boldly that it will judge our isms and covet his imagisms. But he surely posturing for the sake of a lively catalogue when he suggests that representational art, which has endured a great come-back, is much maligned. His loyal defence of it and his frequent use of the word "important" lose some of their controversial flavour when one considers that most of his protégés are already well respected. In essence if not in bulk, all the favourites are here, from Henry Moore to Francis Bacon to Hockney, Hamilton to Hodgkin, artists whom we might otherwise never see — except in Cork Street galleries. Hayward and Serpentine retrospectives, a Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy, in the Tate's own permanent collection. But the summer stretches before us and one can do worse than beat posterity to it and go home.

## Following the colour line

Michael Banton

PETER FRYER  
The history of black people in Britain  
632pp. Pluto. Paperback, £9.95.  
0861047494

The influence of *Slaying Power* will be greater than might be expected from its historical contribution. Seeking to cover a remarkable range of evidence Peter Fryer has been helped by the work of the 1981 International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain; very many of his references have appeared in earlier studies but he has made a variety of original observations stemming from his own research, not least in the Public Record Office. Fryer begins with African soldiers in the Roman army occupying Britain in the second century. He continues through the Elizabethan era, finding new information on black performers in the Lord Mayor's pageants between 1521 and 1708. For the eighteenth century he brings together observations on slave trading from various English ports, the formation of black communities, biographies of some notable individuals, and the long-running battles about the legality of slavery. Fryer makes original discoveries at several points: for example, concerning black bandmen in various army units during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His discussion of the nineteenth century is a bit of a let-down, though his information about blacks in the radical movement before 1850 will deservedly attract attention.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the focus of the book shifts from conditions within Britain to the rise of Pan-Africanism and to the role of blacks in anti-imperialist movements. It then swings back to introduce new material concerning the 1919 attacks upon black settlers — many of them ex-servicemen and seamen who had served in the Merchant Marine during the war — in a series of English coastal towns. The viciousness of the white mobs is enough to make the staunchest liberal despair of any optimistic interpretation. Fryer's constant concern is to present white imperial rule overseas and hostility towards colonial people in Britain as interdependent, so he does not try to distinguish the possibly separate influence upon white behaviour of reactions to any group perceived as competitors for scarce resources. He takes his story on past the 1948 anti-black disturbances in Liverpool and the 1958 riots in Notting Hill, to the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, which he interprets as a "surrender to racism". This is the now familiar claim that the British parliament cannot regulate non-white immigration without revealing itself to be racist.

The slippery concept of racism is now the foundation of the radical analysis. Fryer's thesis is that English racism originated in oral tradition in Barbados in the eighteenth century among planters who told one another that Negroes were beasts without souls who should not be baptized lest this encourage rebellion. These beliefs surfaced as a defensive ideology a century later and appeared in Britain to buttress the demands that no more blacks be admitted to the country, to propose the deportation of those already resident, and to defend the slave system. He states: "Racism is relatively systematic and internally consistent. In time it acquires a pseudo-scientific veneer that glosses over its irrationalities and enables it to claim intellectual respectability. And it is transmitted largely through the printed word". Slavery ended in 1834 but racism was by this time too valuable, says Fryer, to be dispensed with. By reinforcing the colour line it justified imperial expansion. "From the 1770s onwards the empire and the pseudo-scientific racism that served it developed side by side." By the nineteenth century, to judge from this presentation, racism had acquired an almost independent life, nourished by discoveries in biology and anthropology. It is made to appear like a spreading infection which introduced a bias into the reasoning of otherwise sensible people!

There can surely be no dispute that in the years 1848-54 Charles Hamilton Smith in England, Robert Knox the Scottish anatomist, Gobineau the French *littérateur* and Nott and Gliddon in the United States almost indepen-

dently formulated the sort of relatively systematic and internally consistent theory of racial differences which, being false, is often called an ideology. How it is connected with imperialism is another matter. But for present purposes the main area of dispute concerns the 1770s and the views of a handful of writers like the egregious Edward Long, son of a Jamaican planter who served there as a judge and in 1774 published a *History of Jamaica* which shows that he hated colonial governors almost as much as he hated blacks.

Here Fryer is using material that has been discussed in some detail by previous historians. One of them is a West African, Flarin Shyllon, who takes a conservative view of the possibilities of racial integration, for he contends that from their first encounters with Africans the English have displayed a fierce racial prejudice rooted in sexual anxieties. Shyllon believes that Long's view represented an unchanging national attitude. Another historian, Anthony J. Barker, has argued more convincingly to the contrary. Barker reports that other pro-slavery writers repudiated Long's views about race and that leading propagandists on both sides were united in believing that African backwardness was to be explained in environmental rather than hereditary terms. Barker shows that Long "produced criticisms of the slave system so fundamental that his work, for all its racialism, came to be used far more by abolitionists than by pro-slavery writers". Wilberforce, for example, frequently cited Long in parliament. Fryer seeks to represent Long's views on race as a planter ideology while concealing the quite opposite effect of other, and more substantial, parts of his *History*.

An important distinction here is that between ethnocentrism and racism. It is only to be expected that people of any group will look down on those who score poorly against the values around which the first group is built. Nor is it surprising if to start with people reach misguided conclusions about the characters of previously unknown strangers. Scholars work within the explanatory frameworks of their own generations and late eighteenth-century biological thought was suffused by the idea of a Great Chain of Being in which all living things were linked, each kind of life shading into those on either side of it by insensible gradations. When, in 1789, nine "Sons of Africa" wrote to a London newspaper declaring that "thanks to God the nation at large is awakened to a sense of our sufferings, except the Oran Otang philosophers", they left room for the possibility that some of the errors of those who

reasoned like Long expressed in extreme form an ethnocentrism that could be corrected in rational discussion.

Racism as an ideology is said to be immune to such correction, and it is to be understood in terms of its economic and political functions. At this point there is a great gap in Fryer's argument. He believes that the views of the "Oran Otang philosophers" were developed until they became "the most important ingredient in British imperial theory". To review the evidence relating to this would require another book even bigger than Fryer's already substantial tome. Certainly the connection has not been established and there is plenty of evidence to the contrary from both India and Africa.

It is Fryer's case that the first of the anti-black diatribes in the late eighteenth century were directed against racial intermarriage. If so, they failed completely. Fryer parades the animadversions of Long, Thicknesse and Cobbett on this subject, but these same expressions of disapproval simultaneously show that many English women were "remarkably fond of the blacks". It should also be possible to assess the plausibility of other parts of Fryer's thesis. If racism were a handmaiden to empire it should have been transmitted through the printed word to those overseas who pushed outwards the imperial frontiers and to those in the Colonial Office who so long tried to dissuade them from doing so because such adventures cost the government too much money. When Cobbett complained about the peculiar propensity of English women to marry black men he was but four years back from the United States (which may have had a bearing on his views). After another four years had passed he was deploring imperial conquests in India and the great loss of English officers and soldiers; he wanted the British out of India, whether it paid or not. Apparently he was affected by one part of the ideology but not the other.

In any case, what happened between 1774 and, say, 1847? The United States became independent; the British conquest of India was secured, but, thanks perhaps to the caste system, this owed nothing to doctrines of race. The British presence in Canada, the Cape Colony, Australia and New Zealand was strengthened and this entailed some expansion of frontiers into territory settled by non-whites. Racial sentiment may have influenced Governor Eyre's bloody suppression of discontent in Jamaica in 1865, and possibly the China war, but scarcely the military occupation of Egypt. Though things began to change there-

after, when Disraeli criticized the Liberals' anti-imperialism, the "scramble for Africa" did not start before 1884. If, then, racism was a hand-maiden to the empire the connection should have been strongest at the time when Britain was most rapidly extending her rule over non-whites.

The "scientific racism" of Smith, Knox, Gobineau, Nott and Gliddon taught that it was no use for the people of any racial type to try to colonize, rule or settle in any other territory than its traditional habitat. Knox and Gobineau presented their theories as a response to the European revolutions of 1848. What they and their associates wrote could be used against the Irish and against black settlement in Britain, yet it contradicts the claim that the latter suffered because doctrines generated in the colonies were being brought back to the metropolis. At the core of the doctrines both of the 1770s and the 1850s was the axiom of unchanging racial attributes. This was overturned in 1859 when Darwin showed that all forms of life were, by selection, adapting to their circumstances. If racism was important to empire it would have needed modification to incorporate this new knowledge. Earlier writing did indeed draw attention to instances in which a belief in the survival of the fittest justified the maltreatment of subject peoples, but some subsequent studies have found it difficult to isolate the influence of ideologies upon relations on the imperial frontier.

There are many sources of racial hostility other than the imperial-colonial relationship. Douglas Lorimer has delineated a pattern of prejudice appearing in England around 1870 "out of new attitudes towards social status emerging in English society". This fits with a conception of racial distinction as one rather refractory element in a more general differentiation of social status. The colour line is dissolved by absorption into a comprehensive way of ranking people. From this starting-point Fryer's material could be rearranged to tell a story of variations in white hostility. It could describe the hostility as dependent, first, upon the kind of relationship between the parties; second, upon the degree of perceived competition (in which relative numbers are usually important); as well as, third, upon the spread to a largely illiterate population of beliefs about the nature of racial differences given currency by means of the printed word.

Such a story would note that the scanty evidence does not suggest any personal hostility on grounds of a conception of race before the 1770s, though deportation was ordered when competition increased. It would follow Fryer in remarking upon the proclamation of the Lord Mayor of London in 1731 that blacks were not to be admitted to apprenticeships, and upon Sir John Fielding's observation that black refugees from slavery in the 1760s had "the Mob on their Side". London's working people sometimes saw blacks as fellow victims. The biographies provide plenty of illustrations of occasions on which racial distinctions were transcended by other relationships. This other history would describe changes in English society during the nineteenth century, stressing that the English population came increasingly to think of itself in racial terms and to believe itself to be the furthest advanced in an evolutionary process, while showing how varied were the reasons for this.

Yet another book could be written about the whites who, if not so nobly as Granville Sharp, have criticized racial doctrines and tried to prevent black subordination. In Britain at least the opportunities for people to translate prejudices into behaviour have been restricted. It is not now possible to envisage a repetition of the 1919 riots. Despite the numerical increase in the racial minorities and the competition for jobs, white prejudice has been declining. A growing proportion of blacks and Asians, instead of devoting their energies to political struggles overseas, will work to secure a satisfactory place within British society. In creating a new social order all parties can benefit from a better understanding of the history of black people in Britain so far. In the process of creation they themselves will define their relationship to the rest of the population and answer what has hitherto been the central question on which any historian of black-white relations has had to take a stand.

PETER REDGROVE

## The periodicals, 18: Cencrastus

David Craig

Cencrastus  
16: Spring 1984  
Subscriptions, £5 per annum, from 34 Queen  
St, Edinburgh EH2 1JX

For generations now Scottish writers have been given to worrying deeply about nationhood, the waning distinctiveness of their culture, the dominance of the metropolitan media, the long bleeding of emigration (a net loss of 45,000 a year until North Sea oil renewed the economy). The editors of *Cencrastus* were in a deep furrow of tradition when they asked two Scottish writers abroad, Kenneth White in France and Douglas Dunn in Yorkshire, to discuss their experience of exile. The results are refreshing in their lack of fantasy or self-pity. White, a symbolist poet, found his native Glasgow "as dull as ever" in 1967 and migrated to the Pyrenees via Munich, Paris and the Ardèche, where he lived in an old farm-house "like a lizard in the sun". Now he is among the rosy granite and thundering seas of Brittany: "Some folk in France say I'm getting nearer to Scotland. I tell them I'm getting nearer to nothing — like everybody else." He seems to have no feeling of rejection, or not by Scotland: he writes in English and French and is translated into German, Dutch, Spanish, Bulgarian, but not published in Britain, and says he refused to write a novel "about good and evil in downtown Carmel" for the sake of winning Scottish credentials for himself.

Dunn is best known for his poems about working-class Hull. Yet he tells us that two-thirds of his published short stories are set in Scotland, and he is about to move back there: "Several years ago it dawned on me for the first time that these visits home were spent largely in checking facts, feelings and settings for writing, testing the sounds of voices and the cadences of a locality." This is a much more "national" stance than White's — and yet less than a stance, more a practical artist's decision, for Dunn has no wish to pose as a victim of forcible alienation. "No British secret policeman has escorted a single-living Scottish writer to the docks, airport, railway station or a barred-way frontier post. Any presentation of one-way passports that has gone on has been in the head, and to that extent gestural and unreal."

*Cencrastus*, then, is no platform for dogmatic nationalism; and much of this typically close-picked and consistently intelligent issue

(the magazine began to publish in autumn 1979) is an acute analysis of the fatalities to which nationalists are prone — the English sort as much as the Scottish. In a symposium on "English Ideology", Craigs Craig discusses the cult of slow-changing country England which so oddly brings together the Orwell of *Coming up for Air* and *The Lion and the Unicorn* and the sentimental monarchism of C.H. Sisson, for whom the greatness of Tudor and Caroline England "succumbed to the poison of the Scottish invasion".

Craig's essay sometimes veers into the owlish abstractions which have nearly destroyed academic prose over the past fifteen years. But the symposium is recalled to more particular matters by Angus Calder, author of the invaluable social history, *The People's War*, who reviews the large family of early 1940s pamphlets, films and broadcasts which glorified the English for "a kind of dumb strength, which would prevail over Hunnish efficiency". Because he is a keen-witted journalist as well as a skilled historian, he is able to point sharply to the present ("the myth of 1940... was ready to hand for Mrs Thatcher") during an argument that ends with an insight into Eliot's *Little Gidding* worthy of Orwell at his best: "coalition government is the apotheosis towards which... History might be said to have tended".

In general, *Cencrastus* has always balanced nicely on the journal/magazine boundary. It specializes as much in interviews of writers as in full critiques: for example, Margaret Atwood when she was working in Scotland five years ago, and Kurt Vonnegut, whom they caught up with just after he got across the Border to Newcastle last year. The Media Section is mercifully free of semiotic excess, and contains searching and exact analyses of television series such as *Killers* and *Grey Gran* as well as of feature films such as *Another Time*, *Another Place* and *Local Hero*.

The poetry and fiction published in *Cencrastus* remain unremarkable (although there was a sharp-eyed study in urban speech by Alan Spence in No 2 and there was a 5,000-line epic poem by Iain Crichton Smith in No 14). The Chinese folk novel excerpted in this issue, translated into Lallans by Brian Holton, strikes me as dull, though skilful, and the poems by the Chuvash-speaking Soviet poet Gennady Aigi seem not to have survived translation — they limp and posture and exclaim in manners that would have sounded dated in 1920. Yet even in these cases we have to respect *Cencrastus* for honouring its "Scottish and International" banner.

## A certain style

Robert Donington

RICHARD STRAUSS  
Arabella  
Glyndebourne

*Arabella*, containing as it does a high proportion of vintage Hofmannsthal and, what is more, vintage Strauss, is a very worthwhile opera; but also it has deficiencies which can only be overcome by exceptional intelligence, zest and artistry. Completed but not revised at Hofmannsthal's death, the libretto, which would certainly have been improved between the two of them if he had lived, was left unchanged by Strauss out of a mixture of diffidence and reverence, the bad effects of which at times are painfully evident. No one knows quite what they would have done; but as things stand, the opening of the opera has little grip in either drama or music until the entrance of Arabella, when the temperature of both warms up, and we are in a different climate. The second act really falls to pieces after Mandryka thinks, excusably but wrongly, that he has overheard Matteo being given an erotic assignment by Arabella: it goes on far too long with his furious antics and it is generally agreed that Strauss made a pretty, uninspired job of spinning that bit out. Moreover, the basic plot by which Zdenka, masquerading as a boy, forges love-letters from Arabella and finally substitutes for her in bed, out of kindness to Matteo, is so bizarre that only Hofmannsthal, I think, could have cooked it up and got away with it.

So we can be the more grateful that this production floats over the difficulties of the opera, and soars with its greatness. It has really been achieved by style: it is as if there were a special determination to do everything right, to impose no clever gimmicks as the fashion is, but to take it all straight out of the opera itself. John Cox, an old hand and a good one at producing Strauss, has sometimes made mistakes — when he put *Capriccio*, an opera highly conscious of musical history, out of period —

but he makes no mistakes here, directing it with fine imagination but not a moment too fussy or too much at moments of music concentration and dramatic tension. The designer is Julia Trevelyan Oman. She wears remarkable lengths in studying pictorial and other records of Vienna as it was in the period of the opera; she visited Vienna, which she knew well already, and in particular an actual hotel suggested by Willmann Mann as a possible original; she made works of art of her sets, but she also gave them an air of authenticity which could not have happened if she had been other less careful or less of an artist. She is beautifully served by Robert Bryn's lighting. I should not, I suppose, be making quite so much of this if it were not so unusual at present that to match the visual aspect of an opera with the words and music.

This cast is vocally excellent, and the voices are such that they are in good balance with another. There is a certain cutting edge to the voice-production all round, which suits both the music and the acoustics here, which are warm and when required a sensuous counterpoint; he prided himself on a Mozart-like clarity as well, and both the singers and the orchestra are with him there, to great advantage. Ashley Putnam both looks and sings like an extremely moving Arabella, as much in her lyrical reflections as in her romantic outpourings: she makes the utmost (and so of course did Strauss) of her slow descent of the staircase with the symbolic glass of water for Mandryka which ends the opera, and is one of the great scenes of all opera. I thought highly of John Brochelet's Mandryka, and of Arthur Kontarsky's Matteo, and of the excellent singing of all the principals. Bernard Halliday's conducting is true and proper Strauss: neither sentimentalizing him, on the one hand, nor devaluing him, on the other; but allowing him the great subtlety of nuancing and flexibility. The orchestra does not quite glow together in the exciting prelude to the third act, but does where seems to manage to fill without overloading this small but sensitive auditorium.

John 20 1984



# The burden of judgment

Richard Pipes

LEONARD SCHAPIRO  
1917: The Russian Revolution and the origins  
of present-day Communism  
239pp. Temple Smith £12.95.  
085117224 X

At the time of its occurrence, the Russian Revolution was viewed in and out of Russia as an episode in the grand drama of the World War. The immediate antecedents of the February 1917 explosion in Petrograd were intimately connected with the war, in particular the conviction reached the preceding winter by the country's statesmen and generals, that Russia could not hope to wage war to a victorious conclusion under the leadership of the inept and unpopular Nicholas II. The Allies welcomed the Tsar's abdication because they believed that Russia, ruled by democrats, would fight more effectively; the better-informed Germans welcomed it because it opened up the possibility of Russia disintegrating and suing for peace, thereby enabling them to shift a large part of their forces to the Western front.

While inside Russia public attention was promptly diverted from external to domestic issues, abroad the old attitudes continued to prevail. The Bolshevik *coup d'état* was approached in the West exclusively from the point of view of its bearing on Russia's ability to keep the Eastern Front alive. Until March 1918, when the Bolsheviks signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the Allies were prepared to go to great lengths to help them, notwithstanding Bolshevik calls for global revolution and renunciation of foreign loans. For a year or so after the Armistice, France and England and, to a lesser extent, the United States and Japan, intervened in internal Russian affairs, but they did so without a clear sense of purpose. Except for Winston Churchill, who quickly grasped the international implications of Bolshevism, Western statesmen showed neither much interest in the nature of the Soviet régime nor concern for it.

Thus, unlike the French Revolution, whose historic significance was promptly understood by friend and foe alike, the Russian Revolution has always tended to be viewed as an incident in Russian national history – yet another Time of Troubles of a power that had never managed to develop a system of government commensurate with its position in the world.

And yet a convincing case can be made that the Russian Revolution was the single most consequential event of the twentieth century, whose repercussions have been felt in every corner of the world. For one, Fascism and Nazism are incomprehensible except as reactions by nationalist demagogues willing to use Communist methods to resist Communism; and to the extent that the Second World War was unleashed as a result of an accord between the Communists and the Nazis, it, too, cannot be explained without reference to the Russian Revolution. The spread of one-party régimes in the Third World since decolonization makes sense only against the background of the Soviet model and of Soviet assistance to movements of "national liberation".

Not surprisingly, the historical literature on the Russian Revolution reflects this parochialism. Soviet historians, of course, are required to treat October 1917 as the onset of a new era in the history of mankind. But their writings, whether monographic or general, are so subservient to the interests of the Communist Party that they have of necessity very limited intellectual influence. There exists at present no comprehensive history of the Russian Revolution that would depict this cataclysmic event in its full scope as an unprecedented assault on virtually every tradition and institution of social, political and cultural life, for whose leaders, backward Russia served only as an accidental *point d'appui*.

Leonard Schapiro's 1917, unfortunately, does not fill this lacuna. Indeed, it adopts the narrowest possible definition of the Revolution as a phenomenon confined to Russia, whose chronological limits were determined by the collapse of Tsarism and the end of the Civil War; and whose essence was the struggle for political supremacy: in the epilogue, the author admits as much when he says that the purpose of his book had been "to examine the methods

by which the Bolsheviks achieved power in 1917". Regrettably, of all the aspects of the Russian Revolution, this is the one which has been explored the most exhaustively and which provides the fewest opportunities for new insights.

Professor Schapiro, who died in November 1983 while the present volume was being got ready for publication, was widely recognized as a great – arguably the greatest – authority of his time on the history of the Soviet Communist Party. Born in Scotland, he had spent his childhood in Riga and St Petersburg. He returned to Britain with his family after the Revolution, studied law, and in the 1930s was admitted to the bar. During the war he served with the BBC and with British Intelligence.

In 1955 appeared his first book, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy*, a work which traced, more thoroughly and with greater insight than had ever been done before, the Russian opposition to Lenin's dictatorship. This was followed in 1960 by what is probably Professor Schapiro's most influential book, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, a work which, in its revised version of 1970, has achieved the status of a classic in its field. These two books established his academic reputation and led, in 1963, to his appointment as professor of Political Science with special reference to Russia at the London School of Economics, a position he held until 1975, when he formally retired, although in fact he continued to teach and write without interruption.

Schapiro's scholarship was deeply affected by his juridical training and his passion for legality; if one may combine such seemingly incompatible terms, he was a fanatic of law. His deep loathing of totalitarianism derived not so much from its cruelties and abrogation of political rights as from its institutionalized disrespect for due process in the broadest sense of the word. He also despised utopianism. His intellectual heroes in Russia were the historian Granovskii, the political theorist Boris Chicherin, and the *Zemstvo* leader Dmitri Shchipov – liberal-conservatives who had in common respect for legal norms and tradition and whose ideals were essentially Western in origin.

His juridical background also affected his method as historian. The outstanding quality of all his work – and he dealt most of the time with a subject for which he felt an intellectual as well as emotional aversion – was scrupulous attention to the evidence and insistence that every side receive a proper hearing. He went

out of his way to give the Communists the benefit of the doubt, sometimes to excess. Thus, in the book under review he asserts, in the summary of the Civil War, that "the people as a whole, in spite of the unpopularity of the Communists, preferred the Soviet régime to the available alternatives": a claim that is by its very nature unprovable and that happens to be contradicted by much contemporary testimony which depicts the people at large as having been rather neutral in the conflict between Reds and Whites.



Pilgrims, circa 1910, reproduced from Marvin Lyons's *Russia in Original Photographs 1860–1920*, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Schapiro's interests lay primarily in political institutions and the uses and misuses of power. Although himself a deeply cultured person, he tended to neglect the cultural dimension in the historical process. Economic processes and social movements also did not attract his scholarly attention.

The strengths and weaknesses of this approach are evident in 1917, a book intended as a general introduction. The reader will gain from it little appreciation of the immense scope of the Russian Revolution: of the international

ambitions of its leaders (the Comintern is barely mentioned); of the vast social changes which it brought about; of the cultural upheaval which it accomplished in education and the arts; of the unprecedented power over economic resources and labour which it vested in the hands of the government (War Communism rates in this book a bare couple of paragraphs). But the theme of power – its inexorable descent from the party of democracy to that of dictatorship – is traced assiduously, and with scrupulous respect for the documentary record. Although the author's personal sympathies are unmistakable and un concealed, the narrative has neither villains nor heroes, which is a mean achievement when writing on a subject on which emotions have always run high.

Schapiro was a gentle person and a romantic. He loved Mozart, and Turgenev, and other country inns. Much of his scholarship dealt with the "leather coats", the notorious Bolshevik bullies who during the Revolution terrorized the country, but he himself liked to wear an Inverness cape, as if to demonstrate that, although he wrote of revolutionaries, he was not one of them. Those of us who knew him and his humanistic preferences were surprised that, late in life, he reverted once again to the history of Communism in Russia.

The study of the Russian Revolution has a relentless and depressing quality about it. Unless he believes that all the injustices and suffering which it has inflicted on tens of millions of human beings somehow, in the end, turn into a force for the good, the historian's studies it tends to be overcome by its tragedy. Schapiro, for one, saw no beneficial result rising from the events of 1917. Lenin's régime in his view, led directly to Stalin, not to the sense that it made Stalin inevitable but to the sense that it made Stalin appear to have all the "necessary tools" at his disposal to institute a permanent terror. Schapiro thus bore his scholarship as a burden, as someone who, in a phrase which Matthew Arnold used in another context, was forced to deal with situations in which there is everything to be endured.

He sought relief from this mood by abandoning the field on which his reputation rested, devoting himself to his beloved Turgenev whose biography he brought out in 1970. Perhaps his return to the history of the 1917 and the Revolution stemmed from a sense of duty. But there is about 1917 an air of melancholy resignation that was not evident in his earlier historical work.

strains of modernization and the attacks of the socialists.

Rogger's three chapters on the imperial state and those who ran it have many merits. It should be mentioned, however, that although in theory Russia remained an autocracy up to (and even after) 1905, the lack of an effective private imperial secretariat contributed to making genuine monarchical rule especially difficult and inefficient. By the 1880s, very differently from the days of Nicholas I's reign, the power-houses of the central administration were the chancelleries of the Committee of Ministers and State Council, which counted for far more than the Emperor's own personal chancellery. S.A. Taneyev, for example, is more likely to be remembered now as a composer than as the head for over twenty years of Nicholas II's secretariat; can one conceive of the same being true of anyone who headed the White House staff for twenty years? Yet the Russian monarch was supposed to be the supreme initiator and co-ordinator of government policy.

Rogger (whose sympathies lie with Russia's liberals) seems a little unfair to the imperial bureaucracy and those who ran it. Despised by the gentry and loathed by the intelligentsia in pre-revolutionary Russia, it has also inevitably had a bad press from Anglo-American historians for whom European bureaucratic centralism (at least in its *ancien régime* variety) is an alien and disliked tradition. Moreover, historians (like Rogger) who read the usually ultra-critical diaries of high imperial officials are confirmed in their conviction that the government was peopled by fools and blackguards. All this should be taken with a pinch of

# Agin the state

David Fitzpatrick

CHARLES TOWNSHEND  
Political Violence in Ireland: Government and resistance since 1848  
445pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £22.50.  
019 8217536

Political violence, as interpreted by Charles Townshend, is a fluid concept. It includes actions with political implications regardless of their motivation, and actions menacing violence as well as embodying it. Since "implications" and "menace" are subjective notions, this definition effectively extends to whatever actions have been deemed by the state to threaten its supremacy. Where such actions fell outside the purview of the criminal law as it applied in Ireland, the law was altered accordingly. It thus became possible to indict persons writing "intimidatory notices", conspiring to "boycott" unpopular landlords, "grabbers" or shopkeepers, or simply forming "assemblies" in public places. Political violence in Ireland thus embraced not merely open insurrection and terrorism, but also collective action by societies proclaiming an alternative law to that upheld by the state. Townshend's dual preoccupation is with the nature of Irish challenges to government legitimacy, and of government responses to those perceived challenges. His book is an original and fascinating exploration of the continuing tussle between the state and its often reluctant citizens, with the emphasis upon the tactics and expedients employed by the "forces of the crown".

Townshend adopts a loosely chronological framework. He concentrates on the period from the Land War to the Treaty (1879–1922) and reflects only briefly on violence in the two Irish states since partition. "As a historian", he has "endeavoured to maintain a form of narrative order, to allow the evidence to speak as much as possible for itself, rather than drawing out or imposing explanatory structures". The full force of his argument will therefore be lost upon superficial readers hoping to plunder history for evidence of British blundering in Ireland. Even careful readers may regret the absence of thematic treatment of such key strategies as hunger-strikes, boycotts, martial law or internment. All these topics are analysed at various points in the text, however, with frequent cross-reference to other times and contexts. The author modestly disclaims any "pretence . . . to interpretative originality", yet in fact he passes repeatedly beyond mere synthesis of previous scholarship (often threadbare or tendentious in this field) to creative history. This applies particularly to his pithy treatment of the War of Independence, of which many of the most plausible earlier interpretations were in any case his own. In *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921* (1975). Throughout, Townshend makes liberal and effective use of primary sources such as official and political correspondence, and he is virtually up to date in his range of reference, with frequent citation of works published since 1980.

Townshend argues that Irish political violence was more often "functional" than the state repression which both resulted from and provoked it. "Unlike open insurrection, enforcement terror was directly functional", serving to reinforce "fundamental ideas . . . amounting to an unwritten law" by providing mechanisms both for punishing offenders against that law and for defending those who adhered to it. By contrast, the state "was widely perceived there as a mere relation of forces rather than a higher juridical or ethical entity". Townshend's indictment of the state's record is chilling: "British government in Ireland has shown the uncanny knack of getting the worst of both worlds; of appearing to rest on force while seldom exerting enough force to secure real control. By contrast, armed resistors have repeatedly used 'physical force' as an adjunct to 'moral insurrection', and secured the benefit of both combined." Government failure is largely attributed to two factors. The author implies that a more consistently coercive policy might have crushed armed resistance, and suggests in particular that sustained military repression in 1921 would have caused "all but a few of the toughest IRA units" to collapse or suspend operations. In this analysis Townshend is clearly influenced by military com-

plaints of political vacillation and interference: he is perhaps too ready to accept this convenient rationalization of military failure at face value. Recent experience in Asia and Central America indicates that communally backed guerrilla movements are virtually impossible to extinguish by mere state coercion, however unremitting and savage.

The state's sense of priorities in coping with civil unrest contributed further to British failure in Ireland. With rare exceptions such as Beach in the 1880s, officials were all too inclined to attribute unrest to political conspiracy rather than social grievance, and hence interpret it as a fundamental challenge to state authority. Their first priority was invariably to secure the "protection of life and property" before attempting far-reaching social or constitutional reform. By giving precedence to the restoration of "law and order" (or, more recently, to that of "an acceptable level of violence"), successive governments have tended to subvert their subsequent essays in conciliation. In his last pages, Townshend draws a practical lesson from history by chastizing governments which decline to "talk to gunmen". In the past, much progressive legislation in Ireland stemmed from fear of continued or renewed resistance by physical force, and at several critical moments (such as 1882 and 1921) British governments negotiated profitably with Irish gunmen. Townshend maintains that "there is no sound reason why political solutions cannot be reached in the midst of war: indeed some of the most realistic and durable arrangements may be arrived at under just such testing pressure."

Townshend's analysis suggests that intermittent coercion using powers foreign to English law, and persistent communal resistance fostering an alternative Irish law, combined "to restrict the legitimacy of the British government of Ireland". This argument rests upon a widely held, yet still tendentious, model of communal resistance. The structure and function of collective action in nineteenth-century Ireland is the subject of a vigorous and as yet inconclusive debate. It is by no means clear as to what "unwritten law" was being defended by the "secret societies" and their overt counterparts, or what "communities" accepted that law. Many societies seem to have used the rhetoric of communal discipline and law precisely in order to obscure their factional and competitive character. The legitimacy of these resisting bodies may well have been no greater than that of the state, in the minds of those threatened by both. Even in populist organizations such as the Land League, the United Irish League and Sinn Féin, factional conflict repeatedly undermined the mask of solidarity which their leaders sought to present to the world. Moreover, the "unwritten law" which resisting bodies purported to uphold was usually similar to the English law which they rejected. Thus in 1881–2 most Land Leaguers accepted an imposed settlement giving the occupier an interest in his holding but not abolishing the "landlord system", so disregarding the more radical demands of their leaders. Again, the Republican courts of 1920 administered justice according to prevailing principles and relying essentially upon the existing law: the quarrel concerned not the content of the law, but the identity of those enforcing it. It might plausibly be argued that the state lacked "legitimacy" not because its structures were foreign to the Irish community, but because too many Irishmen were excluded from control of those structures for too long. Townshend admits in passing that legislative reform of land tenure and local government tended to promote "assimilation", but overall his concentration upon the structures of conflict rather than assimilation causes him to exaggerate the extent of the alienation of people from state.

This book explores the relationship between nationalism and state illegitimacy without resolving it. Townshend rightly stresses the marked failure of successive governments to "maintain law and order" in Belfast; and to suppress private crimes such as the Ulster Volunteers of 1912–14. These were organizations formed by "loyalists" proclaiming the illegitimacy not of the state but of the national collective seeking to subvert it. Clearly Protestant resistance does not conform to Townshend's model of two competing systems

of law and concepts of legitimacy. Nor does this model encompass the continued flouting of state authority in the twenty-six counties after 1921. As Townshend points out, the new Irish state proved more ruthless and effective than its predecessor in averting armed challenges from the IRA and the Blueshirts. Yet private armies survived, an "acceptable level of violence" persisted, and many citizens continued to reject state authority. Thus political violence in Ireland was restricted neither to nationalist communities and "subcultures", nor to British targets. Why so many Irishmen have been "agin" so many governments remains a puzzle.

Townshend writes concisely, soberly and often elegantly. Some of his *motifs* are borrowed for illustrative purposes, such as William O'Brien's claim that "violence is the only way of securing a hearing for moderation", or Harcourt's remark that coercion was like caviare, "unpleasant at first to the palate, it becomes agreeable with use". Others are pure Townshend: we are shown MacCurtain and MacSwiney sitting "through Easter week glumly, developing a guilt complex which MacSwiney was later to expiate in the grimmest way". Occasionally the author is didactic to the point of condescension towards his less gifted historical subjects. He observes that "striking an attitude is morally simpler than hammering out a compromise", and deprecates "the power of slogans, as always a substitute for intellectual effort and political maturity". He is inclined to

hedge skilfully on controversial but peripheral issues: Parnell was "ground between the millstones of English non-conformity and Irish Catholicism"; Dillon in 1898 saw the agrarian movement as "a tiresome distraction" yet urged parish organization against "land-grabbers" under local "captains"; and terrorism was "denounced by the most authentic Fenians". There are a few slips, such as Lord "Middleton" for Midleton, "the rather outlandish title Civil Guard" for Civic Guard, the assertion that Griffith was "a monarchist by political nature" rather than for tactical reasons, and the claim that by March 1914, the Irish Volunteers numbered 100,000 rather than 20,000.

In general, though, Townshend handles a great range of primary and secondary sources with outstanding coolness, judiciousness and flair. Students of Ireland, both past and present, will benefit from his penetrating analysis of Anglo-Irish violence, his pithy illustrations and also the slightly unfashionable perspective of his enquiry. Seemingly more amorphous as a topic than "nationalism" or "coercion and conciliation", "political violence" is here shown to provide a flexible and robust framework for the recent history of Ireland. Townshend's study also invites, without spelling them out, significant comparisons between Irish and other experiences of communal resistance against state authority. It deserves to join that short shelf of books centred upon Ireland which belong also to world history.

# A mole among Fenians

Leon O Broin

J.A. COLE  
Prince of Spies: Henri le Caron  
221pp. Faber. £8.95.  
0571 132332

J.A. Cole has put together from a variety of sources a good account of how Thomas Billis Beach, a draper's assistant from Colchester, became what John Devoy, "the greatest of the Fenians", called the Prince of Spies. Beach had worked for a short while in Paris among the American colony and, when the Civil War broke out in 1861, he was caught up in the excitement, went to New York and joined the Northern Army as Henri Le Caron. In his letters home he revealed an interest in what the American Fenians, having messed up one attack on Canada, were doing in preparation for another. His father passed the letters to his local MP, who showed them to somebody in Whitehall, with the result that Beach, or Le Caron, received an offer to become a government agent whose task it would be to penetrate the Fenian organization.

The offer was promptly accepted. There was a monetary consideration, of course, but Beach declared that his adventurous nature prompted him to sympathy with the idea, while his British instincts made him a willing worker from a sense of right. He had left the American army with the rank of major, was on the way to acquiring a licence to practise medicine, had a French pseudonym, and made himself to look French, though his knowledge of the language was far from profound. One way or another he had no difficulty ingratiating himself with John O'Neill, the naïve Fenian general, and was with him when he made a sortie into Canadian territory. This ended in comical futility. London had put Le Caron in touch with the Chief Commissioner of the Police in Ottawa, and that was that.

In the years that followed Le Caron kept Robert Anderson, the British Home Office's watchdog on Fenian affairs, apprised of everything he saw happening Fenian-wise in the States, the internal feuds, the espousal of dynamite, the personalities and such connexion as they had with, for instance, the Invincibles, who perpetrated the Phoenix Park murders. His reports were valued, and formed the basis of at least one paper to the Cabinet in 1885. In this it was said that the Irish Parliamentary Party under Parnell, though admittedly working to achieve the independence of Ireland by constitutional means, was perfectly aware that they had secret organizations like the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Clan na Gael, both

essentially parties of force, at their backs. What Le Caron personally knew of Parnell and of the authors of the New Departure emerged sensationally at the Times Commission in February 1889 when, throwing off the mask, he appeared in the witness box to support the case *The Times* had made in articles on Parnellism and Crime which incorporated letters, later proved to be forgeries, in one of which, predating the Park Murders, Parnell was exposed as an advocate of violence. That Le Caron should become a witness was what he had himself proposed, believing egotistically that the story he had to tell would be of prime national importance.

Discussing whether there was government collusion in this or not, T.W. Moody, in *The Times versus Parnell and Co., 1887–1890* – an essay Cole appears to have missed – claims that, even if Anderson's political superiors were not directly implicated, Anderson was. He had written some of the offending articles, basing himself largely on information from Le Caron, and had handed back to Le Caron the reports he had written in America over the years. In order that, in consultation with Caulfield Houston, the secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, a selection might be made to suit their common purpose. Anderson had hesitated initially about letting Le Caron give evidence, but changed his mind and negotiated with *The Times* to have him paid a lump sum or a life annuity for himself and his wife.

The importance of Le Caron's testimony to the Commission turned on his account of an interview he had had with Parnell in the House of Commons. Parnell, he said, had given him a message for John Devoy inviting him to a meeting in Paris – he could not dare come to London – and had added for the benefit of the leaders of other Fenian factions that no misunderstanding should arise between them as they were all working for a common purpose, the independence of Ireland. Then he delivered what Le Caron described as a veritable bombshell. "Doctor", he allegedly said, "I have long ceased to believe that anything but the force of arms will ever bring about the independence of Ireland"; and, going on, he considered the practical aspects of revolution and the resources required to achieve it. In its report the Commission accepted Le Caron's account of the message Parnell gave him for Devoy, but noted that Parnell had denied ever saying that Irish independence could only be won by the use of force. "It is, however, not impossible", the Commission concluded, "that in conversation with the supposed revolutionist, Mr Parnell may have expressed himself so as to leave the impression that he agreed with his interlocutor."



# Last rites of an empire

S. S. Praver

FRITZ VON HERZMANOVSKY-ORLANDO  
Sämtliche Werke in zehn Bänden  
Volume One, Der Gauschreck im Rosenetz.  
224pp. 3 7017 0350 7. DM42.  
Volume Two, Rout am Fliegenden Holländer.  
348pp. 3 7017 0364 7. DM55.  
Edited by Susanna Kirsch-Goldberg  
Salzburg and Vienna: Residenz.

For connoisseurs of imaginary gardens with real toads in them, Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando is the man. The imaginary gardens of his "Austrian Trilogy" — the first two volumes of which have now at last become available in authentic texts — are themselves formed of elements belonging to the reality Herzmanovsky knew: the old Austro-Hungarian empire, with its national mix indicated by this author's very name, its class-divisions, its bureaucratic hierarchies, its architectural and landscape beauties, and its absurd as well as its glorious survivals from the past. All these elements are recognizable in the imaginary gardens of Herzmanovsky's fiction, and are given authentic names and locations: but they are made

strange, *verfremdet*, by a luxuriant fantasy akin to that of Scheerbarth and Kubin in the author's own time (he lived from 1877 to 1954), and that of E.T.A. Hoffmann in the German Romantic period from which he drew so much of the inspiration. As for the real toads: they are the genuinely felt and powerfully conveyed emotions of lust, cupidity, hatred, grief and despair that afflict the creatures of Herzmanovsky's imagination — grotesques that sometimes bear the names of his acquaintances, or are portraits of actual individuals who could be recognized by those in the know. The toads are there, too, in that sense of doom, that feeling of an era coming to an end, which links Herzmanovsky's work to the work of the infinitely greater Musil and to that of Karl Kraus. Austria and the Austro-Hungarian empire are shown by all three of these writers as a place where the ways in which our world might come to an end could be experimentally explored — *Versuchsstation für Weltuntergänge*.

Of these two novels the first, *Der Gauschreck im Rosenetz* ("the terrifier of horses caught up in a net of roses"), is reasonably well-known, especially since its appearance as a paperback in 1963. It was in fact the only book-length work by Herzmanovsky to be

published in the author's own life-time; and it soon attracted a circle of admirers that has been growing ever since. What they admire, justifiably, is not only the Viennese local colour, the vividly evoked Hoffmannesque and Kubinesque grotesques, the many gradations of Viennese speech faithfully caught and reproduced and the exuberantly ridiculous central fable, but also the elegant illustrations with which its gifted author embellished his text.

The novel is set in the reign of the Emperor Franz II (1768-1835). Its characters include a retired court-dwarf and his family; a retired lady-in-waiting who has inherited from her late mistress, the Empress Maria Theresa, a com-mote that plays patriotic tunes and becomes a cult-object; a collector of curios and erotica whose always disastrous advice sets the main plot in motion; and a large cast of civil servants performing ridiculous and unnecessary jobs whose activities and offices will seem immediately familiar to all readers of Kafka. At the centre of the story is one such official: Jaromir Edler von Eynhof, whose ambition it is to present his Emperor with a tableau made up of the milk-teeth of celebrated Austrian beauties, tastefully arranged to form the numeral which indicates the number of years the Emperor has occupied his throne.

In pursuit of the last of these milk-teeth Eynhof attends a masked ball dressed up as a butterfly with enormous wings, and after a series of misadventures occasioned by this awkward get-up he asks the beautiful singer Hölteufel — one of many speaking names in Herzmanovsky's books — to let him have one of her milk-teeth that she might just happen to have preserved. He is rebuffed, and put to flight; and it is this flight through the streets of Vienna, in the course of which cab-horses and dray-horses stamped in terror, which earns him the sobriquet that gives the novel its title. The "terrifier of horses" is Eynhof, the "net of roses" is that of the singer Hölteufel, with whom Eynhof falls hopelessly and unrequitedly in love. Pursuit of this love, coupled with the continued quest for the last milk-tooth he needs for his Emperor, lead Eynhof into more and more desperate and elaborately plotted enterprises, partly orchestrated by the collector and libertine Grosskopf, until he is at last discovered by the police in such sordid and apparently compromising circumstances that his public disgrace seems inevitable. The novel ends with Eynhof's bizarre suicide: he loads a gun with the milk-teeth he had intended for his Emperor's jubilee, and shoots himself.

When Herzmanovsky found a publisher for his manuscript in the late 1920s he was persuaded by that publisher to delete some of its more scabrous passages — to cut out, for instance, a long and elaborate rhapsody on pigeon droppings — and to tone down his caricatures of those who were still considered untouchable *Respektspersonen*. A satirical portrait of a priest, for instance, had to go. Such passages have now been restored, and accretions and alterations introduced by the editor of an earlier, philologically less scrupulous, "collected edition" of Herzmanovsky's work have been removed or undone. A new appendix adds passages the author at one time or another considered including in his novel, together with informative notes and a glossary indispensable to all whose knowledge of Austrian dialects and conditions is less extensive than Herzmanovsky's. Above all, Herzmanovsky's drawings for his *Gauschreck*, sadly absent from the *Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag's* paperback, have been clearly reproduced, and have been supplemented, for good measure, with illustrations which either author or publisher excluded from the 1928 edition. The text is thus as true as possible to the author's intentions at the time of original publication, and gives many clues to revisions he would have made had he lived to see another edition. It is as close to a definitive text as we are likely to get.

The second volume of the "Austrian Trilogy", *Rout am Fliegenden Holländer*, has not appeared in this form (or indeed) under this title before. Herzmanovsky never found a publisher willing to issue it, and never prepared a final version for the press. About half of the material now made available was, however, included in the final volume of the earlier "collected edition" already mentioned. It bore the

title *Scoglio Pomo, oder Bordfest am Fliegenden Holländer*, and the fragment of Herzmanovsky's text which was thus presented had been reworked, quite extensively, by Friedrich Torberg, who claimed to be rendering the text of Herzmanovsky a service any good publisher editor would have performed for him in his lifetime. All such alterations have now been removed, and the text is as it originally appeared: missing portions have been added, and we are at last able to read what Herzmanovsky actually wrote, even if he did not fully like it into shape.

The result was well worth waiting for: in new, authentic guise this second volume of the trilogy proves a worthy companion for the ever-fascinating *Gauschreck*. The "trif" of the title is an assembly or ball which brings together most of the grotesque characters of the book on board the Flying Dutchman's phantom ship, conjured up for the purpose by one of their number, a Hoffmannesque *Sonderling* with occult and hypnotic powers. This assembly ends with a "rout" of a different kind, a defeat that leaves the characters struggling in the water as the Dutchman disappears at the end of the midnight hour. The waters which they flounder surround Scoglio Pomo, an island reminiscent at once of Henry James' Great Good Place and of Genet's Balcony — a place where all amenities are provided for where men and women can live out their tastes. The grotesques whom Herzmanovsky assembles there supplement their obsessions and eccentricities with so much greed, vulgarity, and stupidity, however, that laughter more than once dies in one's throat and the adage about man's vileness in the midst of beautiful nature springs unbidden to mind. In the end the whole assembly is annihilated by a bombardment from the British navy in pursuit of revenge against the countrymen of the Flying Dutchman whose ship provides the locale for the novel's most symbolic images as well as the rationale for its title.

No plot-outline can even begin to convey the flavour of this book, with its superb evocation of landscape and season, its exuberant caricatures of human appearance and behaviour, its collector's fascination with curious objects of all kinds, its multitudinous allusions, to names and events in the Austria of Herzmanovsky's time, its glorious parodies of classical modes of speech, its fantastic speaking names and hugely elaborate titles, its curious mixture of urbane irony and occultist credulity. This is nothing quite like it in German or Austrian literature; but for a full assessment of its significance and importance we will have to wait until the last part of the "Austrian Trilogy", *Apokalypse* Volume III of this edition (scheduled for 1989). It can already be said, however, that *Gauschreck* and *Rout* make Herzmanovsky one of the most original voices of Austrian literature; he joins and complements Kafka, Musil and Kraus, as well as Alfred Kubin, whose novel *The Other Side* sometimes seems like a more sombre and uncanny version of *Rout am Fliegenden Holländer*.

Kubin and Herzmanovsky knew each other, and their correspondence has been published as volume 7 of this edition. Reading Herzmanovsky's side of this correspondence has been anything but an unalloyed pleasure. He emerges as a believer in Aryan supremacy (along the lines of Lanz von Liebenfels rather than Alfred Rosenberg and Hitler), a despiser of Slavs and Jews; a snobbish anti-democrat and a rabid hater of the British. Should one feel the feeling that the private Herzmanovsky was in many respects a nasty piece of work after one's reading of the novels? I now find myself suspecting implied authorial approval of some of his in fiction, even though the satirical and also directed against national, ethnic and religious groups towards which Herzmanovsky's letters display less animus. I also find myself more disturbed by the latvatorial, latvatorial nature of some of Herzmanovsky's most characteristic grotesqueries, though some of these like the enumeration and description of Jew toilets ("Jux-closets") in Chapter IV of *Rout* are very funny indeed. Everyone who comes to terms with this problem in his own way will there can be little doubt that Herzmanovsky was an important and original writer and thinker, and that the devoted editors who have now given us a full and authentic text of his work deserve our respect.

# Ancient, ordinary and impossible

Michael Hofmann

RENATA ADLER  
*Pitch Dark*  
144pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0241 11313 X

*Pitch Dark* is at once a novel and not a novel; it is free to tell stories and not to tell stories; open to the world, and yet frequently (and not at all tiresomely) self-descriptive; it has obviously been cleverly worked over, and yet its greatest achievement is the discovery of its author's greatest freedom, the discovery of a seemingly natural, unregulated way of writing.

The book is divided into three parts: "Oreas Island", "Pitch Dark" and "Home" — although, characteristically, the operation of these divisions in separating the material is far from perfect. The story seems to be that the narrator, disappointed by a long liaison (disappointed, for instance, at never having been taken to New Orleans), leaves her married lover, going first to the West of Ireland and then to Oreas Island, off the coast of Washington State. She writes about these visits, about memories of her earlier life and about the break-up ("You are, you know, you were the nearest thing to a real story to happen in my life"), and finally offers the man what she has written. There is a hint of reconciliation at the end: "There we were. Then, you said in that voice, it's a love letter in a way. I said, What else is it. So here we are."

This story, though, is perhaps the least important aspect of the book — apart from the way that Adler has managed to load the whole of it onto a couple of tenses, casually, blatantly.

# Prodigious horrors

Peter Kemp

VICTOR SAGE  
*Dividing Lines*  
166pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.  
£8.95 (paperback, £3.95).  
07011 28119

The six stories making up Victor Sage's collection *Dividing Lines* contain an unusually high proportion of tiny freaks, monstrous infants and misshapen midgets. At the centre of the opening story, for instance, there's a deformed and diminutive librarian — "about the size, I imagined, of Toulouse-Lautrec" — who claims to be the supposedly "cretinous dwarf" mentioned by Ernest Jones as having saved Freud's life after an accident in a clinic. The protagonist of the next piece, "Destroying Angel", is a murderously disturbed child. First seen brandishing a blood-stained carving knife (she's been dissecting the cat), and endowed with such Gothic appurtenances as a "velvet toad" and "eyes like blobs of frogspawn", she unaccountably fails to arouse the apprehension you'd expect in those who encounter her. In particular, her mother's boyfriend takes credulity to incredible lengths. Though luridly persecuted by the baleful brat — she smears him with blood, breaks eggs into his underpants, and lewdly sabotages his attempts to make love to her mother — he tries to placate her with the ill-advised gift of a book on fungi. In one of the rather strained concluding twists these stories favour, he's left contorted with deadly stomach pains.

"Little Goethe", the hero-narrator of the next story, represents a return to the motif of the under-sized notability. Diagnosed soon after birth as unlikely to grow beyond "something between a large infant and an underdeveloped boy", he passes his lengthy life pretending to be a baby and palming himself off on a string of adoptive parents who take him for an infant prodigy.

Other stories continue this concern with the infantile: "Bagley's Progress" is about a man haunted throughout life by the recurrence of his boyhood nickname, "Baggy". He only manages to escape this, and the image it imposes, by taking to transvestism. Even more ambiguously situated as a result of childhood trauma is the central figure in "Nada", hovering between male and female after being born with prodigious privates. "Crusoe", the last story, is about a man who, having been abandoned by his mother, is brought up by a

world, for her book — like, say, Robert Lowell's *Notebook* — is in part a selective annotation of the last twenty years in America. "Intimate, public," gossip and reading. "These are the characters, these are the events." The freeing of Colonel Dozier from the Red Brigades finds a place in it. So do "Leary and Alpert, two young instructors in psychology." And so does Lady Bird Johnson: "Strange horses my husband is running with, Lady Bird said, at the convention, when her husband was being offered the nomination for the Vice Presidency. Strange horses my husband is running with." On one level, *Pitch Dark* works as a comedy of the professions: civil servants, academics, lawyers, doctors, politicians, journalists, all are the butt of ridiculous stories and sharp strictures from Adler:

At the time, we had a Secretary of State who was always saying hogwash. Hogwash, he would say when it was rumored that there were tensions between his own staff and another. Hogwash, that there was an Arabist tilt in the foreign service. Hogwash, that we would send military equipment to defend some vital interest somewhere in the world.

These nervous shifts of position accompany the reader as he reads. So do exemplars of women as storytellers, delayers and protagonists: Scheherazade, Penelope, Medea, Emily Dickinson saying "Tell it true but tell it slant." This is exactly what Adler does, and with a constant dialectical animation that resists quotation. In her writing limitless curiosity is combined with a refusal to satisfy the curiosity of the reader in any remotely systematic way. The effect is beguiling and surprising.

The same lack of an accountable system characterizes Adler's interest in the outside world: for her book — like, say, Robert Lowell's *Notebook* — is in part a selective annotation of the last twenty years in America. "Intimate, public," gossip and reading. "These are the characters, these are the events." The freeing of Colonel Dozier from the Red Brigades finds a place in it. So do "Leary and Alpert, two young instructors in psychology." And so does Lady Bird Johnson: "Strange horses my husband is running with, Lady Bird said, at the convention, when her husband was being offered the nomination for the Vice Presidency. Strange horses my husband is running with." On one level, *Pitch Dark* works as a comedy of the professions: civil servants, academics, lawyers, doctors, politicians, journalists, all are the butt of ridiculous stories and sharp strictures from Adler:

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# Extraterritorial

Anthony Fothergill

JOSEPH ROTH  
*The Emperor's Tomb*  
Translated by John Hoare  
157pp. Chatto and Windus/The Hogarth Press.  
£7.95 (paperback, £3.95).  
07011 28267

History erupts into the life of Franz Ferdinand Trotha, the hero-narrator of *The Emperor's Tomb*, in its closing, most moving pages, on the day of the Austrian Anschluss. An SA man marches into the café, the last "home" Trotha frequents with his cronies, to announce "a new, German people's government". This comes as something of a surprise to Trotha (to mention the reader) for he is largely cushioned from and unconcerned with political events: he first mistakes the Nazi for a lavatory attendant. Satire it is meant to be, but it is satire that backfires, confirming Trotha as "obsolete . . . extraterritorial among the living". His own response is bewildering. I [belonged] to a palpably vanished world . . . in which it seemed plain that a people exists to be ruled and that therefore, if it wishes to continue being a people it cannot rule itself . . . [the announcement was] as if a beloved woman were to say that she had not the smallest need of me, could well sleep alone but had to sleep with me for one reason only: that she wanted a child.

The tone of self-evidence, the odd "logic" and "smile" reveal more than Trotha (and one suspects Roth) knew, and can stand as an example of how much truth the novel leaves unstated but how much it unwittingly reveals. Trotha, deserted by friends — even the café owner tells him to look up when he leaves — withdraws to his final refuge, "my Emperor Franz Joseph's tomb" in the Kapuzinergruft. As he asks, with a question that echoes back through the novel: "Where was I to go now, I, a Trotha?", for "Trotha" we may read "Roth".

Written in 1938, almost, as it were, from the tomb, this novel, now appearing for the first time in English, bears comparison with Roth's earlier, more famous work *The Radetzky March*. But it traces a later history, from 1913 to 1938, with Trotha narrating in a voice that is by turns elegiac, disoriented, sardonic and doom-laden: the dying years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He has lived an indulged, bourgeois-bohemian café life with young aristocratic friends until the First World War and its aftermath finally shatter the already precarious hold he has on an "ordered life". He is made conscious of the fragility and decadence of the world he has enjoyed largely through his friendship with a distant cousin, Joseph Brancaccio, a Slovenian chestnut-seller, and Mänes Relisger, a Jewish fiacre-driver with whom he largely spends his (prisoner-of-) war years. His faith in (not to say his mythologizing of) these friends leads him to recognize at what cost the emperor and the bourgeoisie classes in Vienna have paid for their order and stability. He is

flotsam technique, a technique explained only at the last, when, after many such questions and denials, we read, "Whose voice is this? Not mine. Not mine. Res ipsa loquitur."

The quality, the thing that speaks in the book must be the Pitch Dark of the title: a darkness compounded of fear, error and unknowing. Almost all the incidents recounted in the book are minor calamities, man-made or natural. Through them, Adler's protagonist discovers what it is to lose her trust in people and institutions. Some pages are devoted — shades of Lowell again — to the appearance in her room of a raccoon, who gradually loses his fear of her, and finally spends all his time on her stove. However, the cause for his behaviour is an unexpected one: "because he was, after all, a wild thing, growing ever more docile, we arrived at our misunderstanding. I thought he was growing to trust me, when in fact he was dying." Renata Adler goes on to amplify this into something even more bleak: "So are we all, of course. But we do not normally mistake progressions of weakness, the loss of the simple capacity to escape, for the onset of love." The decorous exposition here, and the ironic "onset of love", are all typical of this short but considerable book: sharp, distrustful and exhilarating.

Forever searching for "order", Trotha experiences only displacement and flight, hurtling backwards into the future, the ruin of earlier "homes" at his feet: his aristocratic friends, his matriarchal mother, Joseph's and Mänes's primitive nobility, his failed marriage to the would-be craft designer Elizabeth — all testimony to a fractured life. The fragments he shores are, for the reader (though one surmises from his biography not for Roth), deeply problematic. The political mythologies Trotha endorses — the simplistically anti-German quasi-religious nationalism, for example — deserve inspection. No less so his sexual mythologies: "The woman who awaits us in bed" — in this case his wife — "is loved, simply because she is there and available . . . we love certainty. We particularly love the woman who waits, patiently." It should come as less of a surprise to the reader than to Trotha that Elizabeth leaves him again for her lesbian attachment and "the call of art", and ends up (slightly inconsistently?) a Hollywood actress.

Displacement is registered at the narrative level too. Like Austria, Trotha's "essence is not central [but] peripheral". That Roth, a Galician Jew, chooses as his "central" consciousness a Catholic Viennese whose sole reference to antisemitism is that it is now vulgar "precisely because people like my butler [are anti-semitic]" gives us early warning of how much of central importance the narrator ignores or confessedly pretends not to know. Stylistically, the relative absence of direct speech and intermittently the tiredness of repeated expressions are simple measures of the enervation and disengagement of the not-fully-realized Trotha — a centre which, in more senses than two, cannot hold.

While occasionally ponderous, Roth at his best writes with masterly concision, and a wonderful sense of rhythm ("It was an icy night, so cold that at first I thought even a shout must freeze the instant it was uttered, and so never reach the person called.") John Hoare's translation usually captures this, though at times it treads rather heavily (a "seething ingrowing toad of conventional friendliness", unwarranted by the German).

The book is troubling, all the same. Aren't Trotha's adopted positions "untenable", doesn't his voice waver? But that, in the end, is precisely the point, and the novel's strength. For Trotha has no place to go, to stand. And if Trotha speaks for Roth, then without Roth's illusions and "weaknesses" we would not have had such a poignant, contradictory and therefore truthful evocation of the last days. In 1937, beneath a sketch of him at a Paris café, Roth scribbled: "That's really me: bad, boozed, but clear-sighted." That he was not wholly the last but not least of the Viennese is a guarantee of his book's survival.



## Sources of strength

### Anne Stevenson

**ADRIENNE RICH**  
Sources  
35pp. The Heyck Press, 25 Patrol Court,  
Woodside, CA 94062.  
0940592 169  
**MARGE PIERCY**  
Stone, Paper, Knife  
144pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £3.95.  
086358 022 X  
**RACHEL HADAS**  
Slow Transparency  
89pp. Middledown, Conn: Wesleyan  
University Press. \$16 (paperback \$7.95).  
08195 6085 5

These three books by American women are less notable for their feminism than they are for the distinctiveness of their American language. *Sources* is by any standard a beautiful book – lucidly written in the prose rhythms in which Americans are at home, elegantly printed and laid out by the Heyck Press in California. Although it is dedicated to a woman and finishes significantly with the word "womanly", *Sources* is really a philosophical meditation in the tradition of Emerson, a confession by a woman who distinguishes between faithfulness and faith. Without a faith, the poet is faithful to her roots, to her tribal history as a Jew and to her "mission" as a twentieth-century woman.

Here, then, is Adrienne Rich, returning to Vermont after sixteen years of stressful urban feminism, asking herself questions:

*With whom do you believe your lot is cast?  
From where does your strength come?*

## Styles of thought

### Penny Boumelal

**WILLIAM MYERS**  
*The Teaching of George Eliot*  
264pp. Leicester University Press. £16.95.  
0183 2587 7  
**ROSEMARY ASHTON**  
*George Eliot*  
105pp. Oxford University Press.  
£7.95 (paperback, £1.95).  
019 2876279  
**MERRYN WILLIAMS**  
*Women in the English Novel 1800-1900*  
201pp. Macmillan. £20.  
0333 333969

William Myers suggests in his introduction to *The Teaching of George Eliot* that critics have concentrated upon "rhetorical strategies, and the tension between idealism and realism in her work" at the expense of her thought. But recent work on Eliot – not only two of the books under review, but also for example, Gillian Beer's monumental *Darwin's Plot* and Sally Shuttleworth's *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science* – suggests that this is no longer the case, if, indeed, it ever was.

The first, and longest, section of *The Teaching of George Eliot* is given over to an exposition of Eliot's thought in its relation to Positivism and Associationism, to Comte, Bain and Feuerbach. This is, as Myers readily admits, the least original part of his project and it is a pity that it dominates a book that finally seems expensively long and dense. None the less, it has the virtue of using these connections, ranging from Associationist models of mental breakdown to contemporary theories of political economy, to engage with both the larger implications and some of the details of the fiction. In an interesting second part, Myers uses texts by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud to reflect upon the strengths and limitations, both philosophical and historical, of the modes of thought to which Eliot adhered. In a section on "Lust and Rage", for example, Myers provocatively suggests a connection between Eliot's "solipsism" and Lacanian theory. This book's strength and interest lie primarily in Myers's detailed critical readings of the novels. He is most persuasive on *The Mill on the Floss*, particularly in arguing that the final flood works precisely because it is illogical and arbitrary, that it flouts itself as a device which sweeps the ideological tensions raised in the

Confessing to strength as a gift of "destiny". Rich is able to confront the truths "given":

*I think somehow, somewhere  
every poem of mine must repeat those questions  
which are not the same. There is a whom, a where  
that is not chosen that is given and sometimes falsely  
given*

In the beginning we grasp whatever we can to survive

The poet scrupulously examines her inherited Jewishness, her passion for alien New England, her relations with a stern Jewish father and a dead Jewish husband: her confessions are authoritative, intelligent and not self-indulgent.

Rich's tone, however, is uncompromisingly moralistic. In England such a tone would be considered pretentious, and even Rich's most devout admirers must sometimes lament her lack of humour. Like the New England settlers evoked in her poem – their village "white with rectitude and death" who "built on stolen ground" – Adrienne Rich writes out of an unbending Jewish puritanism which prohibits self-mockery. "The woman with a mission" will not be gainsaid. So what purports to be dialogue is, in fact, a monologue, her old self confronting her new self in a revelation intended to be overheard and applauded. Yet in Adrienne Rich the American habit of self-explanation gives way to compassion, and in the end it is the wisdom of this poem that is memorable.

Self-explanation is Marge Piercy's line, too, but where Adrienne Rich is dignified and wise, Piercy is impetuous and lusty. *Stone, Paper, Knife* tells us a good deal about the break-up of

novel out of history, instead of proffering a spurious resolution of theme.

Rosemary Ashton's *George Eliot* is a slighter book, but with a similar emphasis on Eliot's view of her fiction as a medium for aesthetic teaching. Ashton offers a brief biography, making effective use of extracts from the letters, an account of the formation of Eliot's thought – though the major influences are here seen to be Feuerbach, Spinoza and Goethe – and a certain amount of critical discussion. The book is useful chiefly for its clear and interesting exposition of Eliot's debt to German thought, with its incidental insights – for instance, the influence of Goethe's *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* on *The Mill on the Floss*. What Ashton has to say of the novels themselves, however, is bland and predictable, dwelling on Eliot's gift for creating convincing minor characters and lifelike situations, and her use of autobiographical material. There is a disproportionate use of quotations in a book of such brevity; four pages of *Middlemarch* are quoted in their entirety simply to illustrate how "dialogue and analysis interlock".

Unlike Myers and Ashton, Merryn Williams does not appear ignorant of feminist criticism, but she makes little use of it, since her interest runs far more towards historical evidence in such matters as population statistics and legal reforms. But there have already been numerous surveys of woman in the nineteenth-century novel, and this one rehearses much of the same historical material, as well as employing the least enlightening of critical methods: the retelling of plots and describing of characters. *Women in the English Novel* is very much a survey, with chapters on the major "canonical" figures, and the odd page or two on "minor" writers (some of them no longer as neglected as Williams seems to think). Even as a survey, though, it is vitiated by excessively sweeping generalizations and simple inaccuracies. Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* is not, as Williams more than once claims, "the first feminist essay"; what about, for example, Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest* (1694)? Nor is it true that "few of [the New Woman novels] were, in fact, written by women" – Mary Beaumont, Mona Caird, Gertrude Dix, Lady Florence Dixie, Ella Hepworth Dixon, George Egerton, Sarah Grand and Olive Schreiner all readily come to mind. *Women in the English Novel 1800-1900*, unreliable in its information and banal in its criticism, is a superficial piece of work.

the poet's marriage, her despair, her loneliness, her cats, her vegetables, her joyous appetite for sex, her fears for love's frailty, her pity for the world's poor, her hatred of American capitalists, her love of justice and her female affinity with the earth. Ultimately she is unquenchable and hopeful. The last line of her book sums it up:

*Hope sleeps in our bones like a bear  
waiting for spring to rise and walk.*

But is it the bear who will rise and walk or spring? As usual Piercy is not all that fussy about syntax. She is, above all, a great lover, at her best when she is least furious. In "Being left", a gentle poem of understanding she writes:

*What you have abandoned  
is not behind but far ahead  
where we shall never  
now arrive.*

This kind of subtle perception, bold though it may be, is greatly preferable to her melodramatic professions of grief:

*Love died like a poisoned  
cat vomiting.  
Sleep has left my bed  
as he has. They curl up  
together downstairs while I  
pore over scenes as if  
reading the palm of a murderer.*

The cat in this poem is dead in another, and one wonders if it's the cat or the husband who has most betrayed her. With a new lover, Piercy burns with passion: "What we burn are the books, / the couch, the rug, the bed, the houseplants, / the friends who can't clear out fast enough." Or she swims in luscious pools of flesh: "Wet and sloppy the mutual joy / of stirring our bodies together / warm as breast milk / . . . A scalpel slits us open like a busted bag of groceries, and out we ooze."

Embarrassing as a lot of this is, you can't help liking Marge Piercy, whose poetry seems for the most part to have been poured out and then cut up into lines. Garrulous, comical and bright, she surprises with a number of deliciously delicate poems, in the light of which we forgive her the crude ones.

Only one of Marge Piercy's poems –

## Life-saving models

### Mary Kathleen Benet

**ALICE WALKER**  
*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens:*  
Womanist prose  
397pp. The Women's Press. £12.95 (paperback, £4.95).  
07043 2895 3

Alice Walker is the brightest star in a new galaxy of black American women writers and this book is a collection of her articles, reviews and occasional pieces written from 1966 to 1982.

It becomes clear that Alice Walker sees her own most important task as the discovery of the past, of a history for herself. She was, as she puts it, quoting Van Gogh, "suffering under an absolute lack of models". The writers who could have helped her were at best footnotes in patronizing accounts of the Harlem Renaissance; as for the experience of the vast majority of black women, it was lost without trace; "How simple a thing it seems to me that to know ourselves as we are, we must know our mothers' names. Yet, we do not know them."

Such work of revaluation has often prompted the question: is it worth it? Are Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, and the rest of her rediscovered pantheon as good as she says they are? The black answer to these questions, like the feminist answer, is one that Walker also gives: "The art or literature that saves our lives is great to us." This has not satisfied everyone, but luckily the whole arid debate can now be forgotten. Since the publication in 1983 of her remarkable novel, *The Color Purple*, it has been obvious that, in proving herself, Alice Walker has justified interest in her precursors, and has raised monuments to them – literally: her account of finding Hurston's neglected grave and buying a tombstone for it is a tragicomic masterpiece.

At a time when others were entrenching

"Chiaroscuro" – attempts word-play to rhyme. Rachel Hadas, however, who much Piercy's junior by twenty years, is patently cinated by "form". In this first collection, *Slow Transparency*, she has not quite resolved the question of how to say what you mean as keep to the rules. Her poems are awkwardly promising way, at their best when least self-conscious. Many of them were written when she was living on a Greek island, helping out an olive press. Exile and disillusion are the main themes, and she is particularly good at describing Mediterranean light and atmosphere.

Swoop over ruinless land.  
Twin hawks circle the bay.  
Driving around the mountain to give the dog  
light multiplied by sea dawns eyes like mine,  
my gaze turns inland. Stony field, ripe olives  
parched on the trees, red rocks should give rise  
No, light alone, so clearly etched, inhuman,  
maybe god's anger. Two tears, only water  
in this bone island, wet my cheeks.

Later in the same poem she speaks of the  
Poor hills we pass. I wish they could be washed  
with the wringing out of what has happened here  
so not one drop would be wasted.

But the pain in these poems is nearly always submerged by incongruous metaphor. To often the machinery clanks, as in "Foggy Greek", which, with its juxtaposition of "prophylactic" and "rubber glove", comes up a ludicrous image which I'm sure was intended:

Translucent prophylactic, shield, interpreter-  
language. I peel you off, stout rubber glove  
I no longer need. My hand  
is no longer callused by field work.  
I recognize its uses.

The dust-jacket of *Slow Transparency* by Rachel Hadas' formidable academic achievements. To my mind, her poems suffer from being worked on for too long under the microscope of Wallace Stevens – a shadow which, nevertheless, has not been able to dispel that ubiquitous American "I". Yet there is intelligence here, and imagination, which augurs well for the future, especially in semi-surrealist poems such as "Four Dreams about the Sea Fortress".

themselves in sectarianism – black, women political artist, Southern regionalist – Alice Walker has managed to rise above it. All the same time, her motto was "Never be the only one, except, possibly, in your home." She is equally astute on the question of feminism: "Womanist" is her word for a woman who loves other women, perhaps not actually and certainly not exclusively. She relates amusing anecdotes about her refusal to be taken into camp by sectarian lesbians; but, as in her fiction, she explores lesbianism as one response to the violent machismo that is the ideal for many black men. She says slyly: "The word 'lesbian' may not, in any case, be suitable (or comfortable) for black women, who would have begun their woman-bonding earlier than Sappho's residency on the island of Lesbos."

Walker traces her own development as a writer; how she discarded the first draft of her first novel because "it was too recent, too official – everything seemed a product of the immediate present. And I believe nothing was real." She is aware of the artistic flatness that result "because black people have never allowed themselves guilty of global, cosmic, and universal things. When exploring black history, she wants to know not only about white oppression but also out racism among blacks; the "colorist" preference for light skin and straight hair.

The early pieces in the book contain many statements like "The artist, like the rest of the people, but she is also The People." As poet, Walker (on the slight evidence of her first novel) is interested in remaining accessible to the black community. The last three autobiographical pieces are perhaps the best in the book, and seem no longer afraid that individuality will sever her from her roots.

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10125 SUBSCRIBERS US ONLY \$12.95 PER ANNUM  
THE WOMEN'S PRESS, 100 WEST 11TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011

## Plunging into the Pit

### Roger Garfitt

**JAMES K. BAXTER**  
Selected Poems  
Edited by J.E. Weir  
199pp. Oxford University Press. £6.50.  
019 558094 X  
**FLÉUR ADCOCK (Editor)**  
*The Oxford Book of Contemporary New Zealand Poetry*  
146pp. Oxford University Press. £6.50.  
019 558092 3

Some voices are instantly recognizable. James K. Baxter's is one: In the garden beside the dry swimming pool Behind the big house, I recite the Third Joyful Mystery in the company of Anne Who stands as high as my right tit.

The combination of liturgical reference and vigorous colloquialism immediately engages our attention; but it also engages us on a deeper level. By deflating the liturgical reference, the colloquialism restores its naturalness. It disarms our scepticism. It draws us into the poet's company, in the company of Anne. Baxter's voice has a fraternal urgency, an authoritative concern.

This stylistic authority is a contemporary version of Yeats's flexible masculine line. Baxter began writing in Yeats's shadow, and in the shadows of Dylan Thomas and George Barker. His brief "Obsequy for Dylan Thomas", unfortunately omitted from the *Selected Poems*, ranks with the best of the many elegies. Gradually he learned to move, in J.E. Weir's phrase, "away from the gravely rhetorical to the easy vernacular". One Neo-Apocalyptic practice Baxter made entirely his own is the use of symbol and myth: no other poet deploys them with such immediacy. Myths are re-minted, as if they were indeed common experience raised to a particular intensity. Symbols come out of the *Larousse* and into the lounge bar:

My friend at half-past five in a lounge bar  
Told me he thought the world had hair around it  
like the Broughel's whale's-mouth Pit  
Down which an army plunges.

Baxter's earth is continually shelving into that whale's-mouth Pit, or into the vulva of "the manifold mother". He never found it easy to put on "The space suit of money, the clean hair shirt, / That separate us from the lazy dead, / The irresponsible unborn." No one who felt the need to join Alcoholics Anonymous and the Roman Catholic Church in the same year can be said to have lived an untroubled life. But this very difficulty is the ground of Baxter's achievement as a poet. He combines a contemporary scepticism with a traditional sense of the world's possible dimensions, and evolved a poetic language that can be both transcendent and down to earth.

Even in his extraordinary last three years, when he founded a commune and risked becoming "a madman, a nobody" in pursuit of his beliefs, what affirms his sanity is the range of his poetry, its medley of humour; doubt and domestic detail. Several loose sonnet sequences give an almost daily chronicle of his life. Eight sestinas show that he had not lost his ambition as a poet. But perhaps his finest achievement is a short poem, "The Ikons".

Written from somewhere between this world and the next, it is, in its realism and courage, anything but other-worldly.

It's a long time now  
Since the great Ikons fell down,  
God, Mary, home, sex, poetry.

Whatever one uses as a bridge  
To cross the river, that only has one beach.

And even one's name is a way of saying –  
"This gap inside a coat" – the darkest I call God;

The darkness I call Te Whaea, how can they translate  
The blue calm evening sky that a plane tunnels through

Like a little wasp, or the bucket in my hand,  
Into something else? I go on looking

For mushrooms in the field, and the list of longing  
Punches my heart, until it is too dark to see.

Such poetry is beyond imitation, though it is approached by Charles Brasch's last poems, which open Fleur Adcock's selection of *Contemporary New Zealand Poetry*. Her anthology suggests that Baxter's "Jerusalem Sonnets" have been influential on his contemporaries.

G.K. Stead contributes some Baxterian

sonnets, Vincent O'Sullivan some Meredithian. Each achieves his own voice, each is avowedly secular. But that avowal in itself seems a response to Baxter.

Allen Curnow achieves a similar definition when he complains of the evening light being "Too / credibly by half celestial". Curnow exploits science where Baxter exploited myth, invoking "30 g/kg (3%) Metaldehyde" instead of Hecate, insisting on precise measurements on the very point of what is, nevertheless, a haunting return to "the manifold mother":

going down to the sea with a bag  
to pick mussels, having an arrangement with the tide,  
the ocean to be shallowed three point seven metres,  
one hour's light to be left, and there's the excrement  
moon sponging off the last of it. A door

slams, a heavy wave, a door, the sea-floor shudders.  
Down you go alone, so late, into the surge-black fissure.

To create a new effect while still satisfying the old expectation is a trick worth knowing. C.K. Stead does it when he inserts a Venn

diagram into a love poem. Ian Wedde achieves something similar but rather more substantial, in "Dark Wood", where, by a series of associations – masts/mastery/mystery – he turns a pine forest of matchwood back into the sacred wood. Sense associations gather subtly in support of the word associations:

The bright blade  
breaks the grain  
the timber cracks  
the sea-gasp.  
Stucked, a spring tide.  
the dark shed  
sails in a reek of pitch.

Even if his imagination is secondary – he is not so much re-imagining the world as re-working old imaginings – Wedde's work is extremely skilful and gives traditional symbols a new currency.

Cilla McQueen's use of open form is, like Ian Wedde's, unobtrusive:

Alice goes in to the garden  
leaf by leaf: such small things  
as transparency in the sun's light  
move her.

## Daily concerns

### Chris Wallace-Crabbe

**MURRAY EDMOND**  
*End Wall*  
48pp. Oxford University Press. £7.75.  
019 558084 2  
**SILVANA GARDNER**  
*When Sunday Comes*  
46pp. University of Queensland Press. £5.20.  
07022 1832 4  
**PHILIP SALOM**  
*The Projectionist*: A sequence  
88pp. Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1 Finnerly  
Street, Fremantle, Western Australia 6160.  
£7.50.  
0909144 69 9  
**PADDY ROE**  
*Gularabulu*: Stories from the West Kimberley  
Edited by Stephen Muecke  
120pp. Fremantle Arts Centre Press \$10.  
0909144 65 6

Murray Edmond is a young New Zealand poet, free and various, even casual, in his forms; but with an excellent ear. In *End Wall* there are long lines, very short lines, waterfall lines and prose poems. His work is also marked by a purity of diction that only at times approaches naivety, as in the beginning of "Shack":

I read the word shack.  
I like it.  
It is a good solid small word.  
It would be good to live in a shack.  
In inflationary times a shack  
would be a good place to live.  
Welcome to the shack.  
It hardly exists.

### Cairo

Sleepless in Cairo, nine floors above the Nile,  
The air-conditioning playing castanets,  
The caffeine twitching at the ends of nerves.  
Shrouded in fumes the city roars below:

And at its edge burnt Fustat chokes with dust:  
Each footfall, treading, sinks and puffs up dust,  
Cones of smashed brick, an avalanche of shreds,  
Greased smoke from kilns, dismembered pyramids.

A dead dog fans up fast a wedge of stink  
That hangs in heat, then falls to a rushed breeze.

Ancestral drugs: such fear encased in power,  
Layer upon layer, ebony, silver, gold,  
Chariots, sandals, incense, sweetmeats, toys.

The Ramses Hilton rises, catafalque  
Above successive cities, holds us here  
Shrunk Mamelukes and Pharaohs, side by side –

That frozen mask, magnificent, awake  
Night after night, staring at no sky,  
Airless in luxury, at its wits' end.

ANTHONY THWAITTE

Alan Loney's typographical innovations impose a pace so rapid as to be limiting. The difference is partly one of generation. Debates over open form dominated the 1970s, in New Zealand as elsewhere. Alan Loney and David Mitchell belong to the period of self-conscious experiment, whereas the younger poets, Ian Wedde, Cilla McQueen, Tony Beyer, Murray Edmond, belong to the period of assimilation, and consequently seem to have a greater imaginative range.

Among the older poets, Lauris Edmond and Elizabeth Smith both take lyric to the edge of the surreal, Lauris Edmond by an elegiac meditation, Elizabeth Smith by a tart compression. Louis Johnson writes with panache, Kendrick Smithyman with an austere integrity. Vincent O'Sullivan contributes several arresting short poems, in addition to his sonnets. If James K. Baxter is an outstanding figure, one of the major English-language poets of the post-war years, *Contemporary New Zealand Poetry* suggests that his work grew out of a vigorous poetic culture.

But her jokes are open and responsive, poetic in a genuine, earthy way, as in "Three Love Songs":

Not being a grasshopper,  
I can't rub my legs together  
to let you know how exciting  
it will be!  
But like a fly, I can rub  
my hands together,  
eyes popping  
before the feast.

Philip Salom won the 1981 Commonwealth Poetry Prize with *The Silent Piano*. His second collection, *The Projectionist*, is a suite of lyrics linked by theme, place and a semi-narrative. The narrator stays for a while in a small hot town between land and ocean. His landlord was once a projectionist, and the landlord's wife is a humpbacked holy fool, a being like Patrick White's Miss Hare or Rhoda Courtney.

In reaching after other-worldly truths and religious consolations, Salom can be careless of plain, worldly meaning, as in "All that says I am alive is pain, / stones grinding a cleavage of light / wafer-thin". Individual poems are excited but not memorable. The book is organized by an interweaving of phrases, symbols, leitmotifs. It offers more grandeur than grit.

Paddy Roe's *Gularabulu* is a challenge, a delight; and, to readers who are accustomed to modern Western notions of what poetry is, a good source of demarcation disputes. For this is oral poetry, or stories, gathered on tape by Stephen Muecke and so set out on the page as to emphasize the storyteller's phrasing, patterns of anaphora, repetition, slight variation, pauses for breath and the like. Many of these lies and tropes are akin to those in the oral traditions of heroic poetry.

Roe is an elderly Aboriginal from the Broome area of Western Australia who has partly inherited and partly re-educated himself in a wealth of tribal legend and tradition. The tales he tells fall into three main, but overlapping, categories: there are *Bugaregara* stories or creation myths, *Devil story* or glimpses into the world of spirits, and *Trusari* or modern legends, which may include the fantastic but are essentially human events, often placed in historical time and including reference to the white man's institutions or artefacts.

No short sample could give an adequate sense of the vivacious, artful naturalness of Paddy Roe's recitations. Muecke, an anthropologist trained in literature and linguistics, stresses in his introduction the care he has taken not to deform these oral narratives: above all, not to divert them from Aboriginal English into received standard English, as collectors of such material have done ever since Langlois-Parker's collections of the 1890s. Rendering them, one rapidly gets used to lines and usages like "nall that gonna what dis man got he puttin' in the same dish again you know that thing" and becomes drawn in by the narrative traction, the rhythms of breathlessness. This is a deeply beguiling book; and a spacious one. We must hope that the mode of transcription established here will be followed up with other material from Aboriginal culture.



## Round the gun-room

Guy M. Wilson

CLAUDE BLAIR (Editor)  
*Pollard's History of Firearms*  
559pp. Country Life Books. £30.  
0600 33145 7

Major Hugh Pollard (1888-1966) was a very much larger-than-life character, a man with a wide range of interests matched by a voracious appetite for work. Trained as an engineer, he served in the army during the First World War, and in Military Intelligence until 1921. He was a pioneer of forensic ballistics, and a prolific and wide-ranging author, whose work included a number of thrillers, a cookery book and sporting works, as well as his main output of firearms textbooks. His life was punctuated by the sort of incidents of which legends are born, the most controversial of which was undoubtedly his involvement in 1936 in the successful attempt to return General Franco to Spain from virtual exile in the Canaries, an operation of dubious legality which had such fateful consequences for the Spanish people.

Ten years before this, Pollard had published his most important and influential book, *A History of Firearms*, which was the first work on the subject written specifically for collectors. It was also a book of very considerable scholarship and, having been revised in 1930, remained the standard textbook for almost thirty years. In the 1950s Pollard was working on a third edition, but the pace of firearms scholarship was increasing and the ageing author could no longer cope. Claude Blair was asked to take over the updating of the text, but soon realized that mere revision was not enough and, with the agreement of Pollard, assembled a group of leading authorities with the intention of entirely re-writing the work and republishing it as *Pollard's History of Firearms*.

More than twenty years have passed since then, an indication that the task has not been an easy one. It has, however, been very well worth while, and the book's appearance will be welcomed by all students and collectors of firearms, for in no other single work can so much useful information on the subject be found. In general, the scholarship of the authors is impeccable, and in many cases it is enlivened by an appealing sense of humour. The book traces the history of European firearms from the beginnings to the present day, and concludes with chapters on Oriental firearms, the manufacture and proof of guns, their decoration, and the accessories which

were made to accompany them. It is far more comprehensive than was Pollard's original text, but it is still in the same mould, and one suspects that the original author would have heartily approved of the result, especially as about half the book is devoted to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

However, this is not to say that the book is without faults. From the point of view of the collector, it is perhaps a pity that space did not allow for some discussion of fake firearms and their recognition. Also, very little is said of the development of ammunition, a subject dear to Pollard's heart, and one which could have warranted a chapter of its own. It is almost inevitable that a work containing contributions from ten different authors should suffer from some inconsistencies and a certain variability in quality and approach. In addition it has suffered from its lengthy gestation period, which has necessitated considerable revisions of the text even before publication. Most of this has been very skilfully done, but occasionally things have been missed or the age of the original draft shows through: in the case of one of the authors, Harold Peterson, his untimely death several years ago has prevented a thorough revision of his contributions, which suffer accordingly, especially in comparison with the very well-written and scholarly chapters produced by the editor, Claude Blair, and by Howard Blackmore.

The illustrations, indispensable in a work of reference of this sort, are of variable quality. The half-tones have reproduced very well, although the format of the book means that they are often not quite as large as they should be for all the details to be visible. The colour plates, however, are very disappointing, and the line-drawings suffer from being too accurately drawn from the originals: inventory tags and discs are often faithfully reproduced, broken parts are drawn as seen, and missing parts not added by the artist, all of which may well confuse the unwary novice.

None of this, however, seriously detracts from the importance of Mr Blair's achievement. All books of this size, scope and complexity suffer from certain inconsistencies of style and terminology and from errors of fact and omission. It is very much to the credit of the editor that these have been kept to a minimum in this large volume. Now *Pollard's History of Firearms* has re-emerged as the standard reference work on the subject, and Pollard's name will be perpetuated in the way he had hoped. It is, and is likely to remain, an indispensable work of reference for all students and collectors of firearms.

## Long, thin and curious

Anthony North

CATHERINE DIKE  
*Cane Curiosa: From gun to gadget*  
374pp. Paris: Editions de L'Amateur.  
2839710278

This book resembles an exhibition catalogue, with short introductions to individual sections, a large number of photographs and long captions. Catherine Dike not only wrote the text, but also took most of the photographs. The material illustrated comes from her own as well as other private collections, and from museums and auction-houses. The book is divided into four main sections: country walking-sticks, city walking-sticks, professional walking-sticks and weapons. It concludes with an extensive bibliography and index.

To many, a walking-stick is simply a stick. However, as Ms Dike demonstrates, that plain stick may be more than it seems and she has concentrated on ones which have hidden assets. In the section on climber's sticks, for example, is a "life-saver" cane of 1906, which contains a small grappling-iron and was sold as being "useful for rescuing drowning swimmers or alpinists in difficulty". Of greater benefit probably would have been the stick used to keep doors shut "for a room in an inn without door keys", which would effectively free the owner from what Baedeker called "the unwelcome attentions of out-of-work valets" de-

chambre and others of his sort". Toulouse-Lautrec's cane is also illustrated: this contained not only a stem-glass for absinthe, but also a microscopic view of naked ladies, thus catering for two of the artist's predilections. Smokers used a variety of gadget-sticks, and there is even a patent butt-retriever, designed, no doubt, for those whose funds would not quite stretch to Asprey's patent cigarette and match-holder cane. Probably the best-known gadget canes are those that convert into weapons. Large numbers of sword and gun-sticks are shown in this book including "La Diabolique" of 1882 - which, when the handle is turned, sprouts a veritable forest of steel spikes.

Long, thin subjects like walking-sticks are notoriously difficult to photograph, and the author can take considerable credit for her illustrations. There are a few errors in the captions: Henry VIII's walking-staff was known as a "Holy Water Sprinkler", not a "Holy Sprinkler"; and the cannon-word-cane on the same page is eighteenth/nineteenth century Indian, not mid-fifteenth century Persian. Ms Dike is also a bit shaky with her firearms. Flintlocks were introduced in the seventeenth century, not the sixteenth, and the percussion lock shortly after 1807. I was surprised to find no mention of that "vade mecum" of the well-equipped fakir - the so-called Fakir's Crutch, containing a dagger or sword. These are, however, minor blemishes in what is otherwise an interesting, well-illustrated and entertaining book, almost certain to become the standard work on the subject.

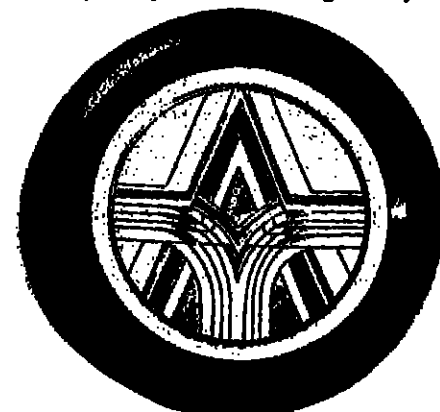
## The home market

Jessica Rutherford

BARTY PHILLIPS  
*Conran and the Habitat Story*  
150pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
0297 784307

The publication of *Conran and the Habitat Story* forms a timely - if inadequately illustrated - tribute to Sir Terence Conran, now a pillar of the establishment and a considerable force in the City: a progress from "stripped-pine to pin-stripe" as a former colleague remarked. The book, however, presents an authorized and somewhat sanitized account of the history of Habitat and its founder.

Most of the success stories of the 1960s have now disappeared into history; not so Conran. Over a period of twenty years he expanded an avant-garde boutique served by staff with Vidal Sassoon haircuts and Mary Quant outfits into a chain of forty-three stores which dominates the modern furnishing market in England. To many today, "modern design" is synony-



Earthenware plate by John Chipperfield (1974), reproduced from Studio Ceramics by Peter Lane (250pp. Collins. £16.00 00 41162 6).

mous with Habitat. Conran's empire in the 1980s encompasses Mothercare, Richard Shops, NOW and his latest acquisition, Heals. If Habitat is designed to appeal to the under-30s with limited means; unfornished tastes and a desire to be modern, Heals will form its complement, catering for the over-30s seeking a more individual image. Conran Associates are also reshaping our environment with interior and product designs for British Airport Authorities, the Next chain of fashion stores, the House of Fraser, Woolworths, Renault and Fiat - to name only some of their clients. Soon British Home Stores will be redesigned by Conran. Though one might fear that every shop in every High Street will become a

Conran clone, one cannot but admire his design and marketing flair, energy and enthusiasm; twenty years on Habitat's still rivals. Determined to make good design accessible to a mass audience, he also made good design into good business. The first shop which opened in May 1964 in the Fulham Road, established the future image of Habitat: white-painted brick walls and quarry-tile spotlights, stock piled temptingly to stimulate the atmosphere of a warehouse - a bright and inviting emporium for home furnishings. It introduced blond woods, pine and ash, a refreshing contrast to the dark woods of the 1950s. He revolutionized the concept of the kitchen (a point not really made in this book) by making it an area worthy of aesthetic consideration, and buying for it into an exciting activity; as David Hicks pointed out, Conran made "below stairs" the last word in interior chic.

With an astute sense of what could be sold fashionably and profitably Conran marketed reproductions of twentieth-century "classics" such as the Cesca chair (the Bauhaus dining chair) and the Wassily chair (entitled "Medici" occasional chair). Accusations of plagiarism are summarily dismissed in the book with the argument (by Habitat's co-chairman, John Stephenson) that little in design is original and that all designers were consciously borrow (which is hardly a justification for reproduction). But by making these widely available at a reasonable price Conran did in fact realize the aspirations of the German designers he copied. More information on this aspect of his design policy would have been useful, indeed: one is curious to know what manufactured them, how they differed from the originals and if Conran ever had problems of copyright. More critical and historical analysis of the role and influence of Habitat would have enriched the book and enabled one to assess Conran not only as a design entrepreneur but also as an arbiter of taste.

Through numerous recollections by Conran's friends, and former and present colleagues, *Conran and the Habitat Story* realistically records the early years of struggle, the unfortunate merger with Ryman and the successive years of prodigious expansion; separate sections explain how the company is run, its personnel, its design, marketing and pricing policies. The book is essentially an interesting but comfortable company history, avoiding unnecessary controversy or criticism. No doubt it will become recommended reading for all new staff, after they have digested the in-film "Habitat is Different".

## Glittering prizes

Clare le Corbeiller

ANNA SOMERS COCKS and CHARLES TRUMAN  
*The Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection: Renaissance Jewels, gold boxes and objets de vertu*  
384pp. Philip Wilson. £47.50.  
085667 172 X

Each type of object included in this first volume of the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection (objets de vertu refers to productions of the Fabergé Workshops and their Russian competitors) is discussed from the standpoints of collecting, design, and manufacture. As the gold box has been the subject of frequent and increasingly serious study over the last twenty years, its history - at least as regards the French box - is fairly well documented and uncontroversial, but Charles Truman suggests lines of inquiry that must still be explored. Much remains to be learnt about the working relationships between craftsmen: what, for example, is the significance of the intriguing fact that the signatures on boxes of similar style and date by Tyron and Drals, not known to have been connected professionally, are clearly by the same hand? And what can be learned of the craftsmen on whose specialized skills the box makers so often depended? Identification of these enamellers and ciseleurs and engravers has not gone much beyond the list of surnames published in 1885 by Maze-Sempier, while the chances of recognizing their styles has seemed

very remote indeed. Mr Truman has addressed this question, but his valid reconstruction of the career and work of the enameller L. J. Aubert only points up the sparseness and uncertainty of available information. Even less known about the box makers and collaborating craftsmen working elsewhere on the Continent in countries like Germany and Austria was the lack of systematic gold records and the absence of the strict French system of marking, so often makes the simplest attribution difficult.

Not that all "French" marks on gold boxes are always what they purport to be, and the section on later boxes with imitation French marks is to date the most thorough discussion of the problems and inconsistencies related to these pieces, going well beyond the easy category of Swiss boxes with "paste" marks. Renaissance jewelry and goldsmith work, being almost entirely anonymous, is particularly vulnerable to forgery, and as we now know, first-class forgers must be approached with an awareness of the legitimate possibilities of comparison with a judicious scepticism. Anna Somers Cocks demonstrates both, supporting her arguments with a generous and pertinent use of illustrations of designs, representative jewelry in paintings, and comparative pieces. Loans on such auxiliary material to her attributions. Their conclusions are not necessarily inconclusive, and serve well properly as incentives for further study.

## Body count

Marc Jordan

NORMAN PARKINSON  
*Lifework*  
190pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £16.50.  
0279 782126  
DAVID BAILEY  
*Black and White Memories*:  
Photographs 1948-1969  
Text by Martin Harrison  
132pp. with black-and-white illustrations.  
Dent. £20.  
0460 043393

At seventy Norman Parkinson can look back on nearly fifty years in the world of chic photography. *Lifework*, a stunning collection of his pictures for the glossy magazines, presents a history of modern times far more alluring than anybody's memories. Parkinson is a believer in "the lofty spirituality of dress" and he has a dandy's conviction that the pursuit of style is a moral obligation. He has chosen to devote nearly a third of his 200 pages to the fifteen or so immediate post-war years when he created some of his most original work. At the time he dominated British fashion photography and portraiture to such a degree that it is difficult now to focus on the 1950s without looking through his lens.

The quality that makes Parkinson's post-war work for British *Vogue* so appealing is the spirited balance he managed to strike between nature and artifice. In the 1930s, finding his way, he had weighted the balance in the wrong

direction: in fashion work he leaned towards the Art Deco odalisque, in portraits towards imitations of Cecil Beaton (he produced a particularly disastrous vertical pastiche of Beaton's famous horizontal Sitwells in 1938). But by the late 1940s, influenced perhaps by the work of Irving Penn whom he greatly admired, and guided by the exceptionally talented *Vogue* editorial team (Audrey Withers, John Parsons and Siriol Hugh-Jones) Parkinson had thawed out the rigidity of smart fashion photography. With his beautiful wife, the actress Wenda Rogerson, as his favourite model he began on a series of editorial photographs for *Vogue* which gave a distinctly English flavour to the presentation of the glamour of the New Look. At the same time he improved his portrait style without inhibiting his talent for making total pattern out of three-dimensional form. There is a remarkably high rate of success among these relaxed but polished pictures of celebrities, scholars and artists: the disembodied, inquisitive, Elizabethan profile of David Cecil (1950); a louche Constant Lambert (1951) and every bit as good as Bill Brandt's contemporary portrait; a monumental shot of John Huston on the set of *Moby Dick* (1955); and the well-known image of Ava Gardner's mature sensuality, a bleached-out, grainy portrait.

Parkinson confesses disingenuously in the amusing and infuriating text which goes with this collection of photographs that he "loves all long-legged creatures". Throughout his career he has done his best work with beautiful women. He has an extraordinary talent for discovering new faces and new bodies: Catherine Pastrie and Celia Hammond in the 1960s,

Jerry Hall and Apollonia van Ravenstein in the 1970s. Yet it is worth saying that what makes his work of the 1950s not just immensely stylish but also graceful and tender and grown-up is the evident warmth of the love for Wenda which pervades the pictures he took of her.

David Bailey's photographs of his favourite model Jean Shrimpton illustrate a quite different and aggressively sexy rapport between photographer and model. By the time Bailey began to work with Shrimpton in 1961 he had already said goodbye to romanticism, cultural continuity and the received values of the old world and to some degree his creative talent is still obscured by his own faux-cynical statements ("my three main interests are photography, money and women") and a press persona he obviously enjoyed and encouraged. Martin Harrison, introducing Bailey's selection of photographs from the 1960s, *Black and White Memories*, perhaps apologizes too much. The hedonism, the iconoclasm, the superficiality were what gave the 1960s their enervating dynamism. And without energy and will there is no style. Harrison believes that after 1967 "The Sixties" as a homogeneous period were over. This was the year that Bailey discovered a new model, Penelope Tree, through whose influence he "became involved in some of the more bizarre excesses of the new drug culture". It was also incidentally the year that Irving Penn began photographing the hippies of San Francisco for *Look*. Nothing could be more antagonistic to chic than this new atmosphere see-sawing between the obsessive laid-back naturalness of the hippies and the sordid Byzantinism of the acid-heads. Too much of

he turns from the current state of the American West to focus on the artistic problems of the early photographers. Drawing on his own experience he ably explains how these men could extract from the chaos of unfamiliar space something fine and intelligible. He balks at the notion that the photographers illustrated rational concepts, for he knows that their arduous efforts were nothing other than the artist's traditional struggle to affirm the coherence of what he alone sees. If, as Adams suggests, the meaning of nineteenth-century landscape photography is finally private and intuitive, this pictorial survey will repay its audience handsomely, but if those meanings also are infected by identifiable personal concerns and cultural values, we shall want closer studies of narrower slices of the American space.

*Masters of Early Travel Photography* guides the reader around the world in nine chapters, each of them paired with a portfolio of photographs: the chapter on Egypt is illustrated by Maxime Du Camp and Francis Frith, that on India by Samuel Bourne, that on China by

the later fashion work in *Black and White Memories* shows the strain of trying to assimilate the inassimilable to the conventions of the glossy magazines.

But in the early years of Swinging London and the Ad Lib Club Bailey was experimenting restlessly to energize fashion photography with the electricity of the New World. In the wake of the 1961 *Young Contemporaries* show he annexed the urban symbols of Pop and produced an exciting and influential series shot in New York for *Vogue*. (Where Parkinson's New York is a sophisticated soft-focus vision of Mid-town Manhattan, Bailey's is the crummy East Side.) At the same time in his studio work he began to use dramatic lighting, stark backgrounds, drastic cropping and a new and arresting repertoire of pose and gesture.

These were also the years of Bailey's first portraits for *Vogue*: Zeffirelli smiling up at the camera from a basket chair; John Osborne and Albert Finney looking like a pair of East End thugs. Bailey's menacing, brilliant and controversial portrait of three real East End thugs, the Kray brothers, appeared in the 1966 portrait collection *David Bailey's Box of Pin-ups*.

The transparency of Bailey's style in the 1960s obscures the artistry of his images. One of the most seemingly artless photographs in this retrospective collection is that of Jean Shrimpton at Tower Bridge in 1961. Not apparently taken for publication, not a fashion shot (she is wearing a shapeless and grubby trenchcoat), not exactly a portrait, it is an icon for the 1960s, and a picture which should be recognized as one of the classic images in the history of photography.

John Thomson, and so on. The book includes some powerfully interesting images, some hitherto unpublished, but the selection is uneven in weight and quality, reflecting the authors' personal preferences and the degree of their research, as well as the contents of their collections and the availability of others. The casual, readable text recounts some fascinating lore, all of which is unacknowledged and obtainable in more cogent, accurate, useful form elsewhere. Since few readers will mistake this entertainment for the gospel, citing chapter and verse is unnecessary. It is better to enjoy Sam Wagstaff's inviting introduction and to savour the exotic sights in the manner of Flaubert, whose satisfaction with a sunset on the Nile, about to be photographed by Maxime du Camp and reproduced in this book, should not be paraphrased.

It was then, as I was enjoying those things, and just as I was watching three wave-crests bending under the wind behind us, that I felt a surge of solemn happiness that reached out towards what I was seeing, and I thanked God in my heart for having made me capable of such a joy.

## Extraordinarily ordinary

Rory Coonan

EVE ARNOLD  
*In America*  
207pp, with colour illustrations. Secker and Warburg. £20.  
0436 01900 00

The itinerant photographer nowadays packs a tape recorder with his Nikon. If a picture of its own fails to be worth a thousand words, then a thousand words can be added to the picture. Eve Arnold's survey of her native United States was undertaken after fifteen years spent in Britain, and the book trades on the now unfashionable photojournalism once practised by the defunct *Life* magazine, killed off by television in 1952. The photographic method of Dorothea Lange and Margaret Bourke-White in the 1930s and 40s was founded on an admirably uncluttered view of the American scene as frozen by the lens. It was a world of black and white, both literally and metaphorically. *Life* presented life as a series of impassioned vignettes: the shaded grey areas surrounded by pictures of impoverished migrant workers in the Midwest concealed complex questions into which it was best not to pry.

Anecdote backed up graphic images of distress; of analysis there was none.

The roots of Eve Arnold's breathless exploration of all things American go back even further: darkrooms were provided on Mississippi river boats as early as the 1860s, and she shares with her predecessors a long-standing ambition to consume the world through the camera. But there is so much to see. So many complicated issues lead to overwhelming questions: "What had happened to the civil rights movement, the black? What of youth? How about the cities, the economy, religion?" She gamely tackles each heading in turn and is democratic to a fault: If she spends a day with the Reverend Falwell at the Moral Majority headquarters in Washington, then she calls in on the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in San Francisco (never was an unholy order of male homosexual nuns so aptly named). She sees the pros and cons of everything: motels and honeymoon beds, festivals and demonstrations, Maine Lobsters and Texas Steaks, Chevrolets and Datsums. Everywhere she went "It was deeply moving to recognize the regard people had for one another". At the end of her personal odyssey she found "that the ordinary does not exist; each person's ordinary story emerges as extraordinary".

The net result of this pictorial caucous-race around America is that everything looks the same; nothing is more significant than anything else, and everyone wins prizes for simply playing a part in the United States. The overall impression is one of blandness, a consequence assisted by more than fifty colour cibachrome prints, few of which would pass muster when set alongside studied compositions by Lange or Bourke-White. This is *Life* without guts, in which rare attempts at comparison fall flat: new areas of Boston remind her "of the new areas of Zurich and Paris". Yet, lest we should think there is nowhere left on the globe safe from the acquisitive lens, it is reassuring to learn that not even the intervention of one Pinchas Schechter, judo brown belt and the third best diamond cutter on 47th Street, could persuade a New York rabbi to permit Miss Arnold to photograph the Lubavitcher sect of Hasidic Jews.

*One Man's World: Photographs 1955-84* (112pp, £5.95, Glasgow: Third Eye Centre, 0 906474 388) presents three aspects of the work of the unjustly neglected photographer Oscar Rezaei, who spent almost thirty years recording the faces of Glasgow and the Highlands.



# Paperbacks

## Archaeology

W. B. EMERY. *Life in Archaic Egypt*. 269pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 020462 8. □. Before 1895 our knowledge of Egypt's history did not extend back beyond the reign of the first king of the fourth dynasty (2,680 BC); although Classical and Egyptian lists of kings before this period, going right back to the legendary Menes, existed there was no archaeological evidence to back them up. But between 1895 and 1956 excavations at Abydos, Hierakonpolis, Nagadeh and Sakkarah (many of the latter undertaken by the author) shed a great deal of light on the 500-odd years immediately following the unification of Egypt. Professor Emery gives a vivid account (first published in 1961) based on these discoveries, of the everyday life and high standards of technical achievement of the Egypt of this time. He describes the state, the military system, religion, language, architecture, industry, trade, domestic life, agriculture and art in detail, and the text is accompanied by black-and-white plates and numerous clear drawings and diagrams (also by the author) to which the reader is constantly referred and which bring the subjects admirably to life.

A. A.

## Art

GWYN A. WILLIAMS. *Goya and the Impossible Revolution*. 194pp. Penguin. £6.95. 0 14 055 133 6. □. This study of the historical and social context in which Goya produced the Capricios, the Disasters of War and other series of etchings and drawings, as well as the Black Paintings, was first published in 1976 by Allen Lane (reviewed in the TLS November 19, 1976). Concentrating on the period from 1790 to Goya's exile in 1824, Professor Williams claims that the illnesses and turning points of the artist's life and work coincided and mirrored crises and upheavals in the political life of Spain as the Ancien Régime was gradually destroyed. Not all the pictures discussed express Goya's reactions to political events of course; many genre paintings belong to this period; the Capricios were satirical attacks on the clergy, superstition, sexual mores and human folly, but were pungent enough for their sale in 1799 to have been stopped under threat from the Inquisition. Williams argues also for the centrality in Goya's work after about 1800 of the *Pueblo*, with its dual Brute/Hero nature, and he sees Goya's work as "a continuous exploration of Spanish people". There are ninety-eight black and white reproductions, many of them, alas, of very poor quality.

A. P.

## Biography

ANDRÉ GIDE. *Journals 1889-1949*. 797pp. Penguin. £6.95. 0 14 057 001 2. □. First published in four volumes by Knopf (1947, 1948, 1949, 1951), and first published by Penguin in 1967, Gide's *Journals* was greeted by Philip Toynbee as "a magnificent and essential book, one of the most obvious masterpieces of the century". Toynbee's enthusiasm for the journals will no doubt be shared by anyone who reads them and yet the book is not exactly a masterpiece. It has no planned unity; it is not a single work of art. Instead it is a wonderful assemblage of disparate things: a real journal, a densely clever record of life, a collection of thoughts, French scintillas, events, maxims, observations, meetings, quotations, and self-directed admonitions and exhortations.

G. S.

JAMES POPE-HENNESSY. *Verandah: Some episodes in the Crown Colonies 1867-1889*. 313pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126 0401 4. □. The title of James Pope-Hennessy's biography of his grandfather (first published in 1964; and reviewed in the TLS of January 30 that year) creates a misleadingly lightweight impression: though the book's scholarship is presented with Pope-Hennessy's customary wit and elegance, it is a serious study of a fascinating man. Passionate and eccentric, Sir John Pope-Hennessy, after a brief career as MP for King's County, was successively governor of six colonies: Labuan (an islet off Borneo), The West African Settlements, The Bahamas, Barbados, Hongkong and Mauritius. In all these places he

exploited the apathy of the Colonial Office and the slowness of communications to set up tensions within his own staff and between the administration and the people, and so precipitated liberalizing crises in colonial life. His fierce belief in racial equality was advanced and contentious at the time, condemned implicitly by the *DNB* after his death, and is no less salutary today. The verandah is that from which Victorian British colonialism is telescopically observed.

A.J.G.H.

## Biology

PETER NATHAN. *The Nervous System*. 298pp. Oxford University Press. £4.94. 0 19 286027 5. □. An updated and much revised second edition of a standard textbook first published by Penguin in 1969, *The Nervous System* is a straightforward and comprehensive introduction to the functions and structure of the brain, spinal cord and nerves of vertebrates. Detailed chapters on light, sound, taste, smell and skin receptors, on nerve fibres, electro-chemical transmitters, modulators and their targets are followed by more general accounts of the events in different parts of the brain which accompany standing and moving; the experience of pain; sleeping and waking; the expression of bodily needs; desires and emotions and the act of speech. But Nathan's study is never as dull as such a summary might suggest. He is well informed in the history of his subject and prepared to be retrospectively and entertainingly outraged (with the arrival of Christianity "human behaviour ceased to be based on a real thing, the brain, and was considered to arise from a wisp of nothingness, the soul. It is difficult for us to conceive of the ignorance of our ancestors in these matters. At one time in Europe, it was believed that the brain was nothing but a bag of mucus; and people thought that when one had a cold and one's nose became filled with mucus, then a part of the brain was coming down the nose through little holes in the base of the skull"). He is good, too, on case histories, not just of the celebrated quarryman Phineas Gage who in 1848 had a four-foot-long iron bar accidentally blown through the front of his head and suffered nothing worse than a subsequent tendency to swear horribly, but also of less well-known and more modern unfortunate: in March 1977 at Troyes in France a "workman had a quarrel with his wife, told her he was going to put an end to his life, left the room, and returned in a few minutes, saying 'Ça y est, je me suis suicidé.' His wife took no notice of this histrionic remark. She did notice a few drops of blood on his pillow in the morning but did not think anything of it. But her husband seemed a little odd all day and could not remember that it was Friday, although he was repeatedly told what day it was. The wife and son thought they had better go and see the doctor owing to his defective memory and odd behaviour. They all walked to the doctor next day. An X-ray examination of his head showed two bullets from a rifle in the front of his brain. The man had never said anything about it, apart from his first announcement, as he could not remember what he had done." The book contains a helpful glossary and is well indexed.

R.O.H.

## History

R. J. W. EVANS. *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy 1550-1700*. 531pp. Oxford University Press. £9.95. 0 19 87085 3. □. The Habsburg monarchy dominated European history for nearly half a millennium. Until the publication (in 1979, during the year's absence of the TLS) of this excellent book no one had really explained why. Most scholars concentrated on the long decline of the empire in the nineteenth century; it was simply assumed that the dominating position it once held was the result of military victory over the Turks and the French between 1683 and 1719.

R.J.W. Evans argues that these triumphs were the final glorious conclusion to a process begun over a century earlier. His book, which won the Wolfson Literary Award for History in 1980, grapples expertly with the numerous problems which inhibited many an earlier scholar. He shows a formidable range of reading in the whole spectrum of European and Slavonic languages. He is able to weave his

detailed knowledge of the empire's many provinces into a scholarly patchwork as complex and subtle as the state itself.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section analyses the development of the monarchy. In the sixteenth century the Austrian lands were flooded by the tides of the northern Reformation and the southern Renaissance. The confluence of the two currents proved potent and produced one of the most remarkable early modern courts, that of Rudolf II. His court and its culture brought Austria closer to the centre of the European intellectual world than ever before or since. Its foundations were, however, insecure. The Catholic monarchy was undoubtedly enriched by Protestantism and Italian humanism; but it was also threatened by them. After 1600 the spiritual and intellectual challenge was exacerbated by economic crisis and international war. It was in this context that the monarchy began to develop a unique version of Counter-Reformation. An alliance between monarchy and Church provided both an intellectual orthodoxy and the institutional machinery needed to enforce it. After 1650 this Austrian Counter-Reformation emerged triumphant. Its most perfect and most strident expression was the culture of the baroque.

The monarchy's successful emergence from the prolonged period of crisis enabled it to vanquish the Turkish and French foes. But the control it exercised over its own territories was neither complete nor simple in nature. As Evans demonstrates in Part Two, Habsburg was only secure in Austria itself. In Bohemia Imperial control was uneasily anchored; in Hungary it was only grudgingly accepted by groups opposed to the dynasty on grounds of religion and nationality. In the Holy Roman Empire Habsburg hegemony was more the product of the interests of the German princes than of real military or political power.

Part Three, the most original section, investigates the complex religious and intellectual dimensions of a system which relied as much on mystification as on muscle. These chapters provide a fascinating anatomy of the foundations of the early modern state. They contain one of the most elegant and stimulating discussions we have of the relationship between religion, culture and power. It is the enviable achievement of this book to have revealed the early modern history of one of Europe's major powers and to have illuminated fundamental dimensions of the European world itself.

J. W.

PETER FLEMING. *The Siege at Peking*. 271pp. Oxford University Press. £3.95. 0 19 583735 5. □. First published by Rupert Hart-Davis in 1959 and reviewed in the TLS of June 26 that year. This paperback edition has a new introduction by David Bonavia. The TLS reviewer wrote: "Colonel Fleming sets his narrative justly within the broad framework of Chinese resentment and Western incomprehension, but his aim is to reconstruct the events surrounding the siege of the foreign legations which began in June 1900, and was not raised until an international relief force broke into Peking in mid-August. In this he has succeeded admirably. He is just, detached, readable and consistently witty. At this distance in time it is the comedy rather than the atrocities that spring out. It is as if a faded sepia photograph had come to life with its various postures and costumes, the surprised look of horror and puzzlement on the faces of those who found themselves in this strange predicament. The ladies in the legations sacrificing their best silk to be made into sandbags; the Italian Minister firmly dressing for dinner throughout the siege; the counsellor of the Japanese legation meeting an unexpected death in 'tails and the bowler hat; the American missionaries who had been given sanctuary in a chapel keeping up their spirits singing 'Nearer, My God to Thee' and 'De Ring-tailed Coon'."

MARTIN MIDDLEBROOK. *The First Day On The Somme*. 365pp. Penguin. £3.95. 0 14 006883 X. □. First published by Allen Lane in 1971 and reviewed in the TLS on August 27 that year. The reviewer wrote: "On July 1, 1916, the British army in France suffered 60,000 casualties in the attack north of the river Somme. The rows of cemeteries and the monuments in the rolling Picardy countryside inspired Martin

Middlebrook . . . to attempt an account of what should draw as far as possible on the experience of the ordinary man in the ranks either as he found it recorded at the time or from correspondence and conversation with survivors . . . This is not, however, another example of a modern mode of history written from a worm's-eye level and seeking to impose by multiplication of eye-witness – and other cock-eyed – testimony. All the official sources have also been consulted. Local newspapers have provided an immense amount of detail. Autobiographies, novels and poems have contributed. Perhaps the most historically valuable, and certainly the most entertaining, part of the book are the stories of recruitment of Kitchener's army; the battalions raised by the various towns and cities in emulous competition and known by such endearing titles as the 10th Lincolnshire (Grimsby Chums) and the 13th Yorks and Lancs (1st Barney's Pub).

## Music

JAMES BLADES. *Percussion Instruments and their History*. 511pp, with 193 plates and 66 figures. Faber. £15. 0 571 18081 7. □. James Blades's magnificent encyclopedic history of percussion instruments was first published in 1970 (and reviewed in the TLS of April 12, 1971); it now appears in a revised edition where the section on technique (illustrating both listener and performer) admits of no developments – the boom in the actual use of percussion instruments being seen by the author as in decline since the early 19th century. Blades as a writer is as authoritative and as thrilling as he is as a player and lecturer. In traces, with lavish pictorial and musical illustrations, the development of percussion from origins and stresses its anthropological importance in evolving with and influencing religious, cultural and imaginative history of mankind. From the earliest drums and rattles to sophisticated sonorities of the boutique and its ominous neighbour the glass-beat machine, Blades characterizes the role of myriad struck and stridulated instruments in their repertoires, and their deployment in varying orchestras and ensembles of the world.

A. J. G. H.

## Poetry

EZRA POUND. *Collected Shorter Poems*. 280pp. Faber. £3.50. 0 571 15213 8. □. Its content identical with those of the 1952 *Faber Poems*: *Collected Shorter Poems* (second edition) (1968), this book is in fact reproduced from the New Directions edition of *Personae: The Collected Shorter Poems of Ezra Pound* (New York, 1949 – itself an enlarged edition of the first *Personae*, New York, 1926). It prints all those poems written before publication of the *Cantos* began the Pound "wished to preserve" (and, as an Appendix, the "Complete Poetical Works" of T. E. Hulme, *Imagisme*), and is thus in the nature of a generous personal selection, slightly less comprehensive than Michael John King's edition of the *Collected Early Poems* (Faber, 1977; £12, and not as yet available in paperback). Perhaps it does not need to be pointed out again how, among the Wordsworth Street naiveties and diluted pre-Raphaelitism of the earliest books one comes repeatedly on arresting and beautiful poems that are essentially approaching the "feel" of many *Cantos*; how the development through the *Riposte*, *Stanzas* and *Lustra* poems, Provence and Imagisme towards the sophisticated ironies and rhythmic achievements of "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" and "Homage to Sextus Propertius" there is writing that seems crude, forced, raucous and inept; how the simplicity and power of *Cantos* seem the more enduring and seductive as the *Cantos* lead more and more readers into emotional mazes. But this is one of the great books of twentieth-century verse, attractively produced, extremely good value and a welcome sight to anyone who has found the earlier handbooks difficult to come by in recent years. Of that edition G. S. Fraser wrote (TLS, June 27, 1952): "The volume differs mainly from *Selected Poems* [edited by T. S. Eliot] in containing more of Mr Pound's weaker poems . . . The stronger poems, however – among them 'Cathay', 'The Seafarer', 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' – are all good", "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" is all there, and have their place among the poems of the century."

# Bombast and burlesque

## Julie Hankey

BARRY SUTCLIFFE (Editor)  
Plays by George Colman the Younger and Thomas Morton  
Inkle and Yarico, The Surrender of Calais, The Children in the Woods, Blue Beard, or Female Curiosity, and Speed the Plough. 264pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50 (paperback, £7.95). 0 521 24019 0  
JIM DAVIS (Editor)  
Plays by H. J. Byron  
The Babes in the Wood, The Lancashire Lass, Our Boys, and The Gaiety Gulliver. 223pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50 (paperback, £7.95). 0 521 24175 8

While the great tragedians of Drury Lane, J. P. Kemble and Mrs Siddons, were looking the other way, a subspecies of drama, inspired largely by the musical, mimed spectacles of the "illegitimate" theatres, was taking hold at Covent Garden and the Haymarket. Without pretensions to classic grandeur, plenty of equally strong emotion and moral uplift were being profitably marketed in these houses, all in with force, gothic horror, rustic sentiment and roast-beef-of-old-England patriotism. The resulting romantic, comic, pantomimic and musical mixtures – joined later by melodrama and its companion, burlesque – pushed other alternatives to tragedy aside. Sheridanian comedy lost its bearings, while the greatly enlarged theatres of the 1790s and later seemed purpose-built for the new taste. The selections in these volumes illustrate that taste and its subsequent decline into self-repeating inanities.

But, in spite (or because) of the crudity of these plays, it is not easy to seize them imaginatively, in the spirit of their first enthusiastic audiences. More than most they need the gloss of the actors, the musicians, the scene-painters, machinists and lighting men. In fact the stage directions and the eyewitness accounts quoted in the introductions make some of the best reading.

Colman the Younger's *Blue Beard* is an extreme, but illustrative instance. Here the "characters" use a sort of schoolboys' literary lingo: "Be dumb!" they say, or "The countenance of the trembling slave was marked with

mystery" or even "Love's wings give swiftness to the leaden hours of dull negotiation, and the mercurial spirit of an enamoured mind consolidates a volume ere Commerce, dozing o'er his day-book, can plod a page". Heavy going even for only two acts, but less so perhaps when it was interrupted by oriental, elephant-riding processions winding among mountainous perspectives; or when the entrance to the sepulchre in the Blue Chamber sank, revealing blood-streaked walls and "ghastly and supernatural forms" – among them a grinning skeleton who, at the end, disappears below with the abominable Abomelique (Bluebeard) in "a volume of flame". But more than that, we learn, the actors, transcending their words, succeeded in being by turns exquisitely moving or funny.

The fact that these plays lived off the genius of the actors and the carpenters was a standard complaint at the time. Jack Bannister filled out the threadbare part of Walter in Morton's *The Children in the Wood* with a display of despair at one point so intense that it seemed to verge on insanity. Bensley turned Colman's Shakespearean *The Surrender of Calais* into something "absolutely sublime". Pope as the guilt-stricken aristocrat in Morton's *Speed the Plough*, Knight as the comic but kindly Farmer Ashfield, Munden as the eccentric with a plan for cleaning rooms by steam-engine – the actor's names are familiar while their parts are forgotten. And though the editor, Barry Sutcliffe, rightly discusses the social context of these plays, and their place in the writings of their authors and their period, one can't help finding them interesting chiefly for setting in motion the men described by Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt.

Sutcliffe makes the point, acknowledging the authors' dependence on the actors, and quoting descriptions of the plays in performance. But the theatrical context he lengthily provides is essentially socio-political, commercial and architectural. Given the virtual co-authorship of the plays by the stage personnel there is room for something fuller and more searching on the acting itself, on the particular qualities of the actors, on the conventions of their "lines" and their innovations. One wants to know more too about the music and the sets – how the burning castle was done, for example, at the end of *Speed the Plough*, or how the cave was indicated (built perhaps, not painted?) or the (movable?) ship in *Inkle and*

*Yarico*. As it is, M. R. Booth's appendix on early nineteenth-century comic acting and on pantomime in his *English Nineteenth-Century Plays* are helpful and enjoyable supplements. One feels the same lack, but more so, in Jim Davis's edition of plays by H. J. Byron, and again M. R. Booth's appendix on burlesque, and the chapter on melodramatic acting in his *English Melodrama* provide useful supplements. For example, in *The Babes in the Wood* (a burlesque on Morton's piece) one longs to know more about the travesty acting of the women who played the cod Macbeth, Sir Rowland Macassar and the pop Sir Roderick – "Pwae-Waphaeille, upon my life!" he exclaims at one point. Their appeal was different, one suspects, from the appeal of Gulliver in *The Gaiety Gulliver*, played by Nellie Farren. Given the inanity of that piece it becomes important, surely, to know that Miss Farren's legs were very nice. (The editor would have profited from Graham Robertson's description of them, and her, in *Time Was*.)

Davis tells us about some of the burlesqued conventions of melodramatic acting, but we need help with the real thing. *The Lancashire Lass* is unshamed melodrama, with mood music, lighting effects and tableaux at high moments, and with very demonstrative acting throughout: "There's a flash in your dark eyes", says the villain to the villainess, "and a quiver of the lip, to say nothing of a grasping action of the fingers . . .". "Kate starts", says the direction, "she twitches her fingers and bites her lips." The villain, as it happens, was played by the young Irving, and Davis gives accounts of his acting. But *The Times* of the day wondered at "the store of histrionic talent" to be discovered in all the actors. One needs to be taught, as it were, how to see, like *The Times* critic, past the conventions.

A vivid appendix on the "sensational" scene in *The Lancashire Lass*, where a paddle-steamer appears on the stage, is very welcome. But Davis only mentions the allegorical finale "The Golden Age", in *The Gaiety Gulliver*, and barely refers to "the Flying dance" in Act IV. He is informative about H. J. Byron's output, and the genres to which his works belong, but in the end one has to ask whether in a series which hopes, not just to introduce us to, but to rekindle interest in, once popular but now (alas, understandably) forgotten plays, it is enough to leave it as that.

Triumph of Love" be prominently hung to counterpoint the action performed before it.

Worth is often illuminating in her perception of redeeming elements in Wilde's early plays. Unlike many critics who point to the displaced and jarring wit in the midst of ranting melodrama in *Vera*; or the *Nihilists*, she delineates Wilde's subtle grasp of characterization and staging. The first true challenge to a critic is, of course, *Salome*. Worth's chapter on the play has some oddities. Despite her admiration of its dramatic power and originality, she curiously trivializes it by phrases that reduce it to something resembling ordinary domestic life – she refers to Herod as "a henpecked husband", *Salome* as an "immature girl", and Jokanaan's reaction to *Salome*'s lust as one of "neurotic intensity". When *Salome* has her final moment of triumph with the prophet's bloody head, Worth comments that the "dark, perverted side has disappeared" and that, "the cruel passion having spent itself", the "value of love is proclaimed". Horrified by the grotesque spectacle of *Salome*'s kissing of Jokanaan's dead lips, Herod does not see – Worth contends – *Salome*'s "deep movement of the soul". But *Salome* remains the pre-eminent work of the English Decadence of the 1890s, for it embodies a monomaniacal will directed towards an unnatural end; When *Salome* finally utters, "I love thee yet, Jokanaan, I love only thee", her transcendent perversion is brilliantly intensified, *le frisson nouveau* achieved.

Critics often view Wilde's society comedies, from *Lady Windermere's Fan* through *An Ideal Husband*, as rehearsals for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The melodrama of the earlier comedies finally dissolves in an absurd but utopian world possessed by aesthetes and dandies. *The Importance*, Worth suggests, anticipates stage directions, such as his instructions in *An Ideal Husband* that a tapestry depicting "The

tury, the use of farce to make fundamental serious (not earnest!) explorations into the realm of the irrational". A few months after its opening in January, 1895, Wilde was in the dock, enacting dandiacally his most irrational life, continuing heroically and defensively to confuse art and life.

## INFORMATION, PLEASE

James Agate, drama critic, essayist: personal reminiscences of him or his circle; for a commissioned biography. James Harding, 100 Ridgmount Gardens, London WC1.

Benjamin Disraeli: whereabouts of unpublished letters to Sir Arthur Helps; also, of the private edition (1866) of General Charles Grey's *The Early Life of the Prince Consort*. John R. DeBruyn, 512 Burkett Street, Jackson, Tennessee 38301, USA.

Sir John Franklin: contact sought with any living descendants of the members of his 1845-8 Arctic expedition, especially of the officers, two able-bodied seamen (John Hartnell of HMS Erebus, John Torrington of HMS Terror) and a Royal Marine (William Braine of the Erebus); for an account of the expedition. Owen Boatie, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4, Canada.

W. E. Henley (1849-1903): six bound volumes of letters written to Charles Whibley and probably sold after 1950; also location of any other letters; for an edition of Henley's correspondence. Daniel A. P. Atkinson, 19 Gavelton Rd, Leamington Spa CV32 6EX, Warwickshire.

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